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CONFIDENTIAL AGENTS.

'The Confidential Agent [*Omen divortii volucre*] is a shy and solitary bird of a somewhat dusky hue, in appearance and habit not unlike the Cuckoo; . . . of an irregular, crooked, noiseless flight, which the male bird takes usually towards nightfall, sometimes with a harsh and dissonant cry, but more commonly entirely mute; the female, whose plumage is varied and rich, making use of a call not unlike that of the partridge. In both, the appetite is voracious and indiscriminate, . . . and, even in the most ordinary specimens, there will be found an abnormal development of bill. They are much given to haunting low-lying localities, the strand of a river forming their favourite feeding ground, . . . where numbers of them may be daily observed, fishing close to the water's edge. Though not by nature pugnacious, they will, when attacked, defend themselves with uncommon tenacity and resolution.'—*Vide passim Nat. Hist. Sup. Art. 'Conf. Ag.'*

THE Confidential Agent is Leporello in nineteenth-century dress; he is Figaro with a horse-shoe pin, and Mascarille in a paper collar. In a century in which, half-way through his career, Gil Blas would have figured at the Old Bailey, the Chevalier des Grieux before Mr. Paget at Hammersmith, and Cellini danced his last dance upon nothing one fine Monday morning at Wandsworth; in a century that at any rate admits to so few weaknesses; the Confidential Agent is all that is left to us of those old rascally, laughing, lying valets of the old comedies of intrigue, those shameless Toms of Etherege and the Restoration, those active *Arlequins* of Italy, and lissom, bright-eyed *Graciosos* of Spain. If, then, you can conceive a Mascarille without his ribbons, his ruff, his rolls, his wig, and his high heels; a Mascarille in a frayed frock-coat, vaccinated, and with cork soles to his boots; a Mascarille whose gay smile has yielded to fog and business troubles, whose hearing is not very good now for intervals on the guitar, who is dull, decorous, and attentive to your story as the commonest of common-law judges; if in your imagination you

can build up such a figure, you will have some idea of the Confidential Agent of to-day, as he moves along the Strand, and backwards and forwards through the corridors of the Law-courts.

Now, let us say frankly, and at once, that the Confidential Agent will do anything for you for money—meaning by that, anything that keeps him this side of the line that, roughly speaking, divides the Central Criminal Court into prisoner and judge. What is there he will not do for you if you pay him properly? He will put the jewels for you into Margaret's bed-chamber; he will send old Martha doddering off on a fool's errand to the other end of the town to be out of your way; he will make love to the little maid-of-all-work, and persuade her, with tears channeling down her grimy face, to mix the sleeping draught for Margaret's mother; he will trip up Valentine's heels, and, if necessary, sit on his head; and at the last desperate pinch, through his old schoolfellow the gaoler, get you secretly admitted to the prison, and have a hired carriage waiting at the street corner to carry you both off to Charing Cross, and catch the mail for Paris. Pay the Confidential Agent, and he will do all or any of these offices. He will thrash your enemy, play a practical joke for you on your friend, make love to your mistress, or watch your wife. In a word, the power of money and the power of the Confidential Agent appear to us to be almost exactly parallel.

In his haunt—in his low and dusky-ceiling'd haunt—sits the Confidential Agent, and discourses to us placidly of a phase of our existence he calls life. It is a chameleon-hued word that of life, and there be few that can define its colour or agree as to its true meaning. For consider how different an interpretation the word life carries along with it to the next four individuals you meet in the street. To the clerk, it is the music-hall, a seat by the chairman, and an introduction one day to one of the artists; to the Sister of Charity, a little room to herself in the hospital hung with religious pictures, her only breath of fresh air at the open windows of the corridor; to the hunting man, a horse kept at Peterborough, or winter quarters over a pastrycook's at Melton; to a Londoner, Bond Street and Piccadilly, a first-night at the Lyceum, and the last edition of the evening paper. Interchange any of the four and what is life to one, to the other, without much exaggeration, would be death. What element in the existence of those four can we agree to be common to each and to all of us, and to be life?

To the Confidential Agent, at any rate, this appears to be life—that which most call folly. Life, says Goethe in his 'Wilhelm Meister,' was by the Children of Joy discovered not to yield a whole number when divided only by reason; there was necessary to be added to it some fraction, some pinch of folly, to make the whole mass digestible. In other words, it is not only *dulce*, but *necesse*, occasionally *desipere in loco*. But these brief passages, evanescent flickers, summer Brocken dances of most men's lives, to the Confidential Agent become life itself. Our stately movements whirl for him with a click into that eternally crazy dance of which only the dancers change; and our noble and solemn music is to him nothing but the *carillon* of a myriad bells frantically shaken by a huge sprawling figure that spreads along the London sky like one of Verrio's goddesses. What wonder if the Confidential Agent has somewhat of contempt for human nature—he who has scarcely seen it sober? What opinion would you have of an individual who, whenever you met him, was, as Figaro says, '*entre deux vins*'; always in a scrape; always lying and whining to get out of it; always cursing, maudlin, utterly contemptible?

Truly, O Confidential Agent, from the bottom of our heart we pity you; for what more terrible than to deal only with the maladies of men, to see none but the maim, the halt, and the blind? Is it possible no good man or woman ever comes your way; no light footstep of a light heart ever springs your dingy stairs; no bright glance of honesty and candour ever shines upon you in your low-browed room? No, none ever. There are none ever come this way but jealous women, suspicious men; none ever but half-pay Don Juans, with red faces and large feet; none ever but loud-voiced Tom and Jerry, with great ears and bulging necks, recommended there by Bob Logic, who, with one foot on the step of the hansom, holds Corinthian Kate below in sprightly doubtful conversation. Life that to most of us has such splendid hues of love and friendship, of self-denial and devotion, is to the Confidential Agent but a dim and tangled skein of folly and intrigue. Women, whose tenderness and unselfishness have beamed on most of us, to him are cold and barren as mere figures in a shop window; and men with their generosity, their nobility of thought and act, sink into the poor forked wretch who goes through life as though it were one long Burlington Arcade—one long passage from dark to dark of flaring gas and idle talk.

The Confidential Agent goes to a press that stands against the

wall and pulls its doors open. It has shelves and pigeon-holes and drawers stuffed full of papers, little packages neatly tied with tape. He pulls them out by handfuls and throws them on the floor. 'Instructions from clients, cases completed,' he says, as the papers fall. 'You will see I am right. Open any one of them, the story is always the same.'

Among the paper faggots there leaps and frisks a large red mouse, whose delicate skin is all aglow and seems transparent.

'She knows!' he cries with a chuckle. 'She knows; she lives in the press. Any of them, anywhere, all the same!'

Oh, secrets of a great city!—we cry in answer—sordid and shameful; oh, records of infamy and folly; abandoned pages, drift sheets of insanity; shall we not among them all find one true note, one honest cry of an honest heart in pain, one simple record of one good life, for the moment only troubled? In all that crazy pile, if peradventure we search until the dawn, can we not unfold some touch of dignity, some other tale than that of self-indulgence? Surely, under all that pile there must lie somewhere hid some point or speck of light; among all those charcoal embers of bad passions, surely nature has in store for us one diamond?

The Confidential Agent laughs, and the red mouse seems derisively to give the pink ghost of a smile.

'Any of them, anywhere, all the same!' he repeats. 'See here, the one she is sitting on—now, my beauty!' And with a flip of his forefinger he chases the slim animal, and from the packet of papers unties the tape.

Drawn then in the dust, designed in the charcoal embers, you are to conceive a lordly mansion in a lordly square, troubled for all its magnificence with discord and discontent, penetrated for all its pastilles with the frowsy atmosphere of stale quarrels. Husband and wife, who loved each other once, hating each other now; eyes and lips, that once smiled, now doing naught but scowl; and stalking everywhere, 'upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's chamber,' gaunt Suspicion and haggard dryskin'd Jealousy. For, if you look attentively down into that lordly mansion, whose splendid front is all beflowered from dining-room to attic windows, you cannot help detecting the dangerous figure of an old lover; who, beaten once, flat against the garden-wall, while the bridal procession of his false mistress passed with the nodding minstrels and the clangour of bells, fell back to bite his nails and scowl all the honeymoon hours and all the early years

of marriage; and now, having *reculé pour mieux sauter*, is back again without a shade of annoyance on his handsome face, and in that lordly mansion parts the stale atmosphere with lightning flashes and in the boudoir strikes inharmonious notes that vibrate far into the night.

'Quelle rage a-t-on d'apprendre ce qu'on craint toujours de savoir!' cries Don Bartolo in the 'Barbier'; *quelle rage*, too, has the owner of this lordly mansion to learn as much, though naturally he fears it; and so, the fury gnawing at his vitals and the pain growing insupportable, down he journeys one winter's day to the Strand, and with a bird-call summons to his side the Confidential Agent. By this time, neck and crop clean out of the boudoir has the old lover been turned, and by this time his patent-leather sole no longer presses the yielding stair-carpet; but that, severe as the course has been, the lordly owner fears has not been severe enough. There is still the Mercury of the penny post, and for the messages he carries fortunately still and always that emotionless and unerring detective, the blotting pad. 'See!' in a burst of anger he cries to the Confidential Agent, 'see, she dares to write to him!' and, holding the white paper up to the winter's light, there across the sky lies as a portent the broken portion of a message of affection. Get him only proof more complete than this, join and connect for him only those broken lines; get him, in a word, a letter; and every sheet of it shall be paid for in banknotes; get him that, and he will pay for it as though he were the craziest of collectors and it the crowning treasure of his collection.

Enters, then, that lordly mansion the Confidential Agent in search after a letter, in the fitting and noble guise of Jeames, the second footman, a new and innocent Jeames, with a rare Devonshire colour in his cheek, only too ready to make himself useful; above all, only too ready to run little errands, to carry notes, to post letters. Strange, but Jeames with his fine Devonshire vigour is always anxious to run to the post, and in that is always indulged, in all but with the mistress's letters; those are ever in Chawles's efficient hands; none of her letters there are ever posted but by him, who, daily driving with his mistress, daily descends at the street corner, and, with a stately care and melancholy, to the blushing box consigns the precious papers. And, do what he will, the innocent Devonshire lad Jeames never even can get a sight, much less a handling, of the letters daily entrusted to the silent

The secret on his sticks

Chawles, from the actual hands of the mistress of this lordly mansion.

Baffled? Ay, but for the moment only. Difficulties only stir the resourceful soul of the Confidential Agent, who gives up the place—which, young and willing and Devonshire-bred as he is, is yet too hard for him, and sets himself to watch outside instead. In heat and in cold, in wet and in fire, he saunters round that lordly mansion, behind it and before; and, everything coming to him who knows how to wait, one day it comes to him, and, often disheartened and beaten, at last he wins and is gay.

On one of the days while he is watching in the rain, it is too wet for madam to drive; but, wet though it be, her letters must be posted, and by whom, of course, more secretly and surely than by the faithful Chawles? Though the sky fall, the letters must go; though shoes and stockings be ruined in the mire, the three o'clock post must be caught. Chawles comes into the portico and he looks up and down, up at the sky and down the street at the pillar-box. It is very wet, and his noble shoes are very thin, and after a moment's pause he beckons magnificently to a poor devil of a crossing-sweeper, slushing at the puddles, and—jingling twopence—bids him keep the letters dry and put them in the box for him. And, jingling the twopence, he rests and balances on his heels and watches it done, and throwing the money into the road, saunters superbly indoors.

The Confidential Agent's chance, clearly his chance, at last! The next hopelessly wet day there he stands at the corner in the sweeper guise, slushing at the puddles, and limping for largesse after the few passengers. And as he blows on his fingers he prays with all his heart for Charles to come, and come quickly, with the letters for the three o'clock post.

Will Chawles never come and breathe the air in the portico? Patience, oh Confidential Agent! Await at least the post hour, which, coming at last, brings with it Chawles, who, resting and balancing again on his heels, looks again up at the sky and down the street, and, again jingling twopence, calls to the poor devil of a crossing-sweeper. In the limping crossing-sweeper he recognises not the willing Devonshire lad Jeames. To his vague and bland eye are not all crossing-sweepers alike? A miserable crew whose souls are given over to the seductions of *white satin*, what should such pariahs know of the secrets of high life?

'Post these, Tom,' he cries affably, 'and here's a couple of

coppers for you!’ And, with his heart beating, off limps the Confidential Agent to the pillar-box down the street, with the broom under his arm. His hand trembles and his eyelids shake as he looks down at the little packet. Is there one among them for his man? There is! And as at the box he deftly posts them, all but that one, he can scarcely keep from a wild flourish of his broom: and then, receiving a friendly nod from Chawles, he watches him indoors, lets the twopence lie in the mud, and with a yelp of exultation leaps into a cab, and so home to change and telegraph. Within the hour that letter was in his lordly patron’s hands; within the hour, he was ready for other and similar adventures.

A good beginning that of the pile, a hopeful beginning of our Diogenes’ search. What next? What other packet does the red mouse sit on? for she, with her blinking sinister eyes, we take to be our guide. She, whose long thin tail lies urging us, like a flaring comet pointer, to open and to read—this.

What have we here? Apparently here we have youth, its *jeunesse orageuse* just past; the sky clearing, the trees dripping, the thunder growling and rolling off over the hills into the next county; youth who desires to forswear sack, to become respectable and to marry, send his boys one day to Harrow, and for his health and figure’s sake amble in the Row before breakfast. Sensible young man, sensibly resolved; what is there to prevent him realising so amiable and reasonable a project? Surely nothing; for cannot the wandering sheep return to the fold just exactly when he pleases, and be received with rapturous baas of welcome from those who have never felt the least inclination to stray? And if the flight into Bohemia have damaged him just a little, what, after all, does a tear in the fleecè matter, or an eye somewhat bleared and bloodshot? Are not these trifling blemishes, indeed, something of a relief among a flock so painfully, glaringly uniform?

Ah, but how if in the weald of Bohemia, under a stunted thorn, he have vowed to some one else? How if, under one of the Bohemian hedges of wild sloe, there sit a maiden all forlorn, too practical to weep, too knowing to sigh—clasping instead to her bosom letters, a portrait, a ring; a maiden all forlorn, talking wildly of a priest all tattered and torn, a solicitor all battered and worn? Well, if there be, what matter? give her money, man. So much for letters, so much for portrait, so much for ring—sim-

ple enough, surely. Money?—*in a louder key*, Money? Yes, ma'am, we thought twenty pound—Twenty pounds? Money? Oh, sir, how you mistake me! What have I done to make you think so meanly of me? Oh, sir, are there not wounds of the heart too deep for gold to touch—are there not, etc. etc. etc. See, *passim*, the great Adelphi melodrama 'In the Fields.' Immense applause, huge enthusiasm, from the gods; from the stalls, silence and something like contempt; from the poor frightened wandering sheep, an alarmed baa. Very unexpected, very unexpected and awkward!

An unpleasant position, and very hard on the poor wandering sheep, who has long had enough of the brambles of Bohemia and desires only to stay at home and bathe his damaged eye, grow his fleece again, and henceforth, with his pretty partner, who cannot even find Bohemia on the map, lead a purely pastoral life of pipes and crooks and nourishing food. Certainly, very hard if the arm of the maiden all forlorn be long enough to reach him in the sheepcote, long and stark enough to lift him over the wattled fence by the fleece with a struggling expression of extreme stupidity, amid the piteous baas of his snowy little partner and the other terrified respectabilities; very hard if after a few pure evenings of pan-piping under the great still stars, with only the distant waterfall, the distant yelp of the wolf slinking round the shepherds' fires; very hard if by the budding horns he be dragged backward to the ballet landscape and the property banquet of goblets and game-pies, to the arbours one can so easily push on one side, the rustling chaplets of tissue roses, the loosened zones, the hard bright eyes—very hard and very unreasonable! For consider, often as the father will reclaim his son from a life of folly and disorder, often as Duval *père* reclaims his Armand, how often is it, do you suppose, in two centuries that a Manon follows to confess in her irresistible fashion to Des Grieux and lead him back in spite of himself to the *allée verte* of Asnières? Very hard.

But why, after all, not defy this maiden all forlorn; why not snap the finger at her and bid her do her vulgar Bohemian worst? Let her, if she will, ring the kitchen bell, or hang on to the area railings and throw her bonnet into the dining-room window, or even part melodramatically the honourable company at the church, and, while the organ gurgles 'The Voice that Breathes' plant her fish-bone stiletto of Billingsgate in the very

bosom of the bride. A foolish suggestion, foolish and ignorant; for observe, there are to the bride that is to be a father and a mother of the highest, austere respectability, of the snowiest, heaviest fleeces in the fold—you understand? A son-in-law who has not always been quite steady, *qui a fait ses farces*? Never, while there are cellarettes in Bloomsbury and ormolu candlesticks in Hyde Park Square!

Baaing and fluttering, then, down comes our poor startled three-year-old Southdown to the Confidential Agent. 'Portrait, ring, letters!' he bleats. 'Get them for me only, and their weight in gold is yours!' And with that he falls flat, and you can see his heart beat frantically through the tear in his fleece. For in all honesty he is sick and wearied of Bohemia, and in all honesty is tenderly attached to his pretty little partner, and if he be dragged back again to the old one, it will in more senses than one be the ruin of him.

So, with his most solemn manner, and his most solemn clothes, off he goes, the Confidential Agent, to see what he can do himself with the maiden all forlorn; and, imitating as closely as he can the *père Duval*, speaks ponderously of life and its duties, youth and its follies, a young man's ruin, a young girl's broken heart, and a good deal else, in the choicest phrases of the 'London Journal,' all of which, to the maiden all forlorn, is very much as though you shot peas at a crocodile and expected at the first volley it would lie on its back in the mud and yield its hide for a prayer-book cover. For it clearly appears that this daughter of Bohemia, whose father was a colonel in the Bohemian army, has inherited the warlike and depredatory instincts of her sire, cares no jot for money but desires only—oh, monstrous passions of humanity!—revenge. So the Confidential Agent drops his solemn manner and takes off his solemn clothes, and turns in his mind some other scheme.

Now, it appears that the windows of the respectable caravanserai where the maiden temporarily resides, itself a posthouse, we may call it, on the Bohemian road, are by pure good fortune at this very time in want of blinds; curtains she has, but no blinds. This the poor sheep, who still bleats piteously with his tongue out, well knows and remembers. 'And the letters and the portrait,' asks the Confidential Agent; 'do you remember or know where they are kept?' Yes, a *secrétaire*, between the windows; he remembers that very well, for did not he—Good! be a man, get

up and go home; come back to-morrow at this time, and letters, portrait, and ring shall be yours. In the morning, then, the maiden first seen walking out for her health's sake in the opposite direction, two respectable young mechanics, with everything connected with new blinds, call at the respectable caravanserai and request to go upstairs to fit them up. Once alone in the room, assistant Jim keeps the door, and before you can say 'Screw-driver!' the Confidential Agent has confidentially forced the secrétaire and confidentially abstracted the letters, the portrait, and the ring. What need of more? Suffice it to say, that no steadier young husband, no more irreproachable son-in-law at this moment goes citywards, and back again takes his afternoon club-walk, than he whose fleece was once so ragged, whose poor left eye was once so bleared and bloodshot and damaged.

Upon our word, a *conte drolatique*! What next? Crime next, baffled police next, a Continental scamper in the depth of winter after a criminal:—the Struggle! the Capture! the Sentence! Christmas spent quite magazine-articly in an express train, and New Year's Day on the mail-boat from Calais, with the prisoner, Jack Rascal, biting his nails under lock and key in the cabin below.

Jack Rascal robs an insurance company of a million of money, and is off no one knows where, least of all Dogberry and Verges of the City Police, who are both at their wits' end, no very great journey for either of them, as it appears. Jack Rascal may be in London or at the bottom of a Brazilian mine, stripping tea-shrubs in Thibet or planting vines in Natal. Wherever he may be he must be found, to that the insurance company have quite made up their minds; and, failing the police, at such a time who is there like the Confidential Agent? But it is Christmas-time, and a desperate hard winter, and the Confidential Agent will not quit the tender glow of the domestic hearth for anything under *carte blanche*, which, after a meeting of directors, is accorded him, and with a cheque-book whose pages are numberless as leaves in Vallambrosa, and for device, *reperiendus est latro*, the Confidential Agent makes his first move.

His first move, naturally, is to find where Jack Rascal may have fled to, and be in hiding; his next to follow and bring him back; but where he may have gone to or may be, who is there can tell? Certainly neither Dogberry nor Verges, who, though much to be admired from the way they have borne their losses,

are poor officers of the Duke, take them which way you will. They do nothing but shake in their old furred cloaks and wish themselves home and abed, guess every penthouse shadow to be the man they want, and are firm in the belief (mainly to save themselves trouble) that, after all, Jack Rascal has committed suicide, and in that way, as one may say, run completely to earth. So alone the Confidential Agent sets off to a melancholy suburb where Mistress Jack resides, under cover from the storm, and waiting the chance to join her husband, who, though a trifle light-fingered, has ever been the best of men to her; and there in that melancholy suburb, to the drone of an organ, the Confidential Agent watches for the postman, and as that postman has an odd trick, only recently acquired, of dropping letters, more especially those directed to Mistress Jack, the Confidential Agent walks behind him, picks them up, inspects and politely returns them to the postman, who naturally is vastly obliged. Nor is it long before an envelope arrives in the handwriting so earnestly desired by more than one; a Danish stamp, the postmark Hallebrod. 'Mr. Postman, you have dropped a letter!' 'Ah, very much obliged to you, sir!' And the Confidential Agent leaves the melancholy suburb, and the organ with its wheezy 'Marta,' and, with the knowledge that Jack Rascal writes from Hallebrod in Denmark, seeks Dogberry, dozing in the watch-house.

'Wake up, Dogberry! good news, Jack Rascal is at Hallebrod; we start to-night! No, not you, thank you, Mr. Verges!' who thankfully pulls his mittens over his chapped knuckles and sticks his knobbled old feet again in the straw, while, alack the day! away darts the Confidential Agent, dragging after him the ancient Dogberry by the skirt, who once in his brisk and alert youth went to Paris on the business of the Court, was promptly houcussed by La Baillière, and badly beaten by La Baillière's friend. But now—oh woe is him!—it appears he is necessary to serve the warrant, and in the depth of winter too—horror! Let us not make it any of our business to record the sufferings of poor Dogberry on that fearful winter's journey, nor relate how among *μυρί' ἄλγεα*, he fully realised that definition of travelling given by Madame de Staël in 'Corinne'—'to traverse unknown lands, to hear a language which you hardly comprehend, to look on faces unconnected with either your past or your future . . . for the hurry to arrive where no one awaits you, that agitation whose sole cause is curiosity, lessens you in your own esteem, while, ere new

objects can become old, they have bound you by some sweet links of sentiment and habit.' Over all this let us draw a veil; let us draw the curtains as though poor Dogberry were sleeping sweetly inside a *Wagon-lit*, rolling at his ease over a darkened country, lightened only by the wastes of snow. It was only when, after seven days and nights' continuous headlong rush, he found himself at last in the barren *Speisesaal* of the 'Zum Ritter' at Hallebrod, that for the first time for seven days and seven nights sitting still in a chair, tears fell on each side of his crinkled old nose, while with many antique and rusty oaths he swore that he would move no more, that Hallebrod would see the last of him, that the little wooden spire of Hallebrod church would solemnly point the rest of the force, Hugh Otecake and George Seacole, to where he slept his last sleep, down by the roots of the sombre waving pines. Strong waters do something to restore him, strong waters and a smoking supper; and then, by the Confidential Agent, still full of life and spirits, the waiter is cautiously attacked on the subject of Jack Rascal, Dogberry listening cynically all the while, as cynically as he can, that is, with his mouth full; for he has no belief, and never had any, in any connection between Jack Rascal and Hallebrod. The waiter is talkative, it is the depth of winter, and he sees so few faces, and certainly, he says, yes—an Englishman has been in the 'Zum Ritter,' left that morning, occupied, indeed, the very room they are now in. An Englishman of the name of Robert Morley. 'Robert Morley?' chokes Dogberry, with wheezy laughter; 'Robert Morley!' the only funny thing he has heard since he started. 'Anything like that?' is the Confidential Agent's calm question, handing the waiter a photograph of Jack Rascal. 'The same gentleman,' replies the waiter, and the photograph falling that moment face downwards on the floor, there at the back is the name Robert Morley, photographer, Cheapside.

'How now, Dogberry, my boy?' laughs the Confidential Agent—'how now? Get you quick to bed and rest your old bones, for first in the morning we must be off again. Robert Morley and Jack Rascal have fled again, have doubled back no doubt along our very route, sitting on one and the same seat.' At the post-office they learn Jack Rascal's letters are to be sent on to Lucerne, and at once the telegraph is set to work, and within the hour there flashes back from Frankfort the message that Rascal passed through untroubled three hours ago, and by

now is safe in Switzerland ; where, however, the police are warned, and no doubt will look after him. But, unhappily, there is wanting there in Switzerland an Extradition Treaty to get him away, and as they journey back, Dogberry ever dozing and dreaming of the ' Cheshire Cheese,' the Confidential Agent looks grave, and his mouth is grim.

At Lucerne, then, lies Jack Rascal, in durance, and, so near and yet so far, is shown them by the tantalising Federal police. There he is, the scamp-hero of close upon a million of money ; there he is, eating a restaurant dinner sent in, and they cannot get at him. If you want him, M. Dogueberrie, declares the *chef-de-police*, you must make an application to the Federal Council at Berne, who will probably refuse it ; and if they don't, if they grant it, between now and then who knows what may happen ? Then does the Confidential Agent recall his *carte blanche* of the plundered insurance company, and, taking the *chef-de-police* aside, thus reason with him, as man to man, as brother to brother. ' Come now, M. Bost, just consider, what on earth can a fellow like Jack Rascal matter to you, while to us you know very well how much he matters ? He has robbed us of a million of money ; he has done nothing to you, nor will do except cost you money to keep, and trouble to look after, and perhaps ultimately get away altogether, having been no good either to you or to us. Suppose you let us look after him for you. See here, M. Bost, we are dining to-night together at the " Adler " ; be a good fellow and join us, and bring your friend Jack Rascal with you ; we shall all be delighted to see you both. And if in the hurry of departure you leave your friend behind, as a stick or an umbrella—such things are so easily forgotten, so easily happen after dinner—be sure we shall take good care of him, if only for your sake. And further, M. Bost, before we part, whether you see your way to dining with us or not, accept from me, your personal friend and fellow-worker in the glorious cause of repressing crime, this trifling donation—only a few hundred pounds!—to be applied by you to whatsoever charitable purpose you please, Home for Decayed Officers of Police, Benevolent Fund, Orphanage, whatever you will ! Depend upon it, we make no inquiries how it is applied, nor shall ever desire to see any receipts ; we shall never want to hear anything more about it. We only want you and Mr. Rascal to dine with us to-night, to come early, and stay late.'

And Jack Rascal dines with them at the Hôtel Adler, and is duly forgotten and left behind, Dogberry blinking at him and chuckling senilely the while, and is duly carried off, struggling and swearing, and duly appears at the Old Bailey, and is duly sentenced; and all in spite of his counsel, who makes a great point of so monstrous a breach of international law, and demands with a thump on his knee that his client be replaced in Lucerne gaol. But—'Gentlemen,' observes the judge to the jury in his blandest tones, 'gentlemen, believe me, it is no concern of yours or mine how the prisoner at the bar got here, how it is he figures before you in the dock. There he is, that is the main point, and, he being there, you have to deal with him according to the evidence and your consciences.' And so they do, and Mistress Jack bewails his loss for well-nigh twenty years, and now, under a sky of dappled serene, where let us hope she is happy, helps him fill a colonial appointment of some considerable dignity and emolument. And Dogberry went back to his watch-house and, wrapping his old gown round him and shouldering his staff, showed how the famous capture came about.

Tramp, tramp across the land; splash, splash across the sea! rode Dogberry and the Confidential Agent fourteen days and nights, and the Confidential Agent, as he recalls it, lies back thoughtfully in his chair and plays abstractedly with another packet. What now? we ask; more crime, disaster, and intrigue? or possibly an effervescence in the packet to raise our spirits, not depress them, a taste of fizzing human cheerfulness, perhaps some little comedy of the drawing-room?

The Confidential Agent frowns and thinks, hopes and fears; we, in expectation, take the packet from him and examine for ourselves.

Sitting in the low-browed room one summer's morning, dreaming of country trees and country pastures, thick billowy hedges and the lowing kine; back, perhaps, in his innocent Age of Marbles; to the Confidential Agent, scenting in enchantment the May, there enters a young lady in agitation. One moment in Arcadia, the next in the Strand, such is ever the Confidential Agent's fate and our own. He was but just now tickling trout in Hampshire, and the next moment he is busy taking notes on half a sheet of paper of what the lady has to tell him. Just so, madam: exactly! The Confidential Agent tries to look as though he had never heard anything like it before, promises he will do his best, and bows her out. She is very unhappy: her husband's manner has totally

changed towards her within the last three months, she fears he no longer cares for her, she fears—alas! there is some one else. And you wish to have him watched, madam? Yes, sir. It shall be done, madam, and the report of your husband's proceedings sent to you daily.

Scarcely is the young lady gone, her veil down, her cab-door shut, when to the Confidential Agent, off wandering again in Hampshire with his hands in the water down at the town boys' bathing-place, there enters quickly a gentleman of middle age, himself also much agitated. The Confidential Agent has barely time to turn the sheet of paper for more notes, when he finds himself listening to a complaint from the male side, the *ἀνδρὸν*, of the same household. The middle-aged gentleman is very unhappy, he gives the Confidential Agent to understand; his wife's manner has totally changed towards him within the last three months, he fears she no longer loves him, he fears—alas! there is some one else. And you wish to have her watched, sir? Yes, I do, most decidedly. It shall be done, sir, and the report of her proceedings sent to you daily.

Here you have it then, as close in the dark atmosphere as you can get to fun; husband and wife both watched at the instigation of the other, reports of the comings and goings of each daily sent to each, no doubt read by each at the same time on opposite sides of the same breakfast-table. The gentleman reads his wife was yesterday in the Row, visited the Stores, was there three-quarters of an hour, thence took a cab, went to tea in Bryanston Square, and came home again; the lady that her husband was in the City by half-past ten, landed at a City club, took tea at the New Universities, and came home again. Perhaps two more utterly peaceful, commonplace lives never were so closely scrutinised as those of the worthy pair who, fearing the loss of each other's affections, were having each other watched.

At the end of three weeks, 'Enough!' cried the gentleman, and 'Enough!' cried the lady, to the Confidential Agent. Together they cried, 'I am satisfied: my suspicions, I perceive, were utterly unfounded. You may withdraw your men.

My husband	}
My wife	}

 I see clearly to be as pure as the driven snow!' And that very evening, when ordinarily the gentleman would breathe stertorously over the evening paper and the lady play softly to herself in the drawing-room firelight, each with a nervous clearing of the

throat approached the other and declared they had something to say, something to confess. You can easily guess what it was. Can you not see them rush into each other's arms, that foolish couple; can you not see the hansom that bears them next morning down to Regent Street, where, as with the native Indian tribes, a Rumpoor chuddar shawl clenched the peace of this three weeks' war?

No nearer to fun than that, oh Confidential Agent! no nearer than that? for, after all, that fun is somewhat dreary that leaps unwieldy with suspicion and mistrust. No nearer, at any rate, than this!

In the Regent's Park, within a monkey-chatter of the Zoological Gardens, there dwells alone in spinster magnificence a certain Miss Emma Precise, who, what with Brighton in November and Scarborough in August, and a couple of sluggish horses in brass harness along the Marylebone Road and out towards Hampstead all the rest of the year, goes as near making her fifteen thousand a year spin as one of her trim and cautious nature can go. She is Miss Crawley, apparently, with more than her solitariness and money; though, in Scarborough one August, she does something Miss Crawley never would have done—she falls in love. In Scarborough, then, last August, in the drawing-rooms she always occupies, patters in and out below her, in the dining-rooms, an elderly gentleman with an odd and crablike walk and the trick of always muttering to himself, a white umbrella under his arm and a hat tilted over his nose, well-nigh down to the roots of his close iron-grey whiskers; but, for all his queer manners, plainly a gentleman, both to Miss Precise and the faithful handmaid who does her wisp of hair for her at night. This odd, and to her intensely attractive, figure, with all the ardour of seventeen does Miss Precise begin to daily watch for, blink behind the blinds at, even use the opera-glasses on, as the unconscious owner struts along the parade or sidles up and down the Spa, having duly made himself uncomfortable with a glass of the odious Northwater. Soon—oh, mischievous God of Love! 'Oh, naughty, naked little boy!'—they pass each other going in and out, soon they bow, soon they speak, and, to omit the intermediate steps, soon does Miss Precise aim at—Cancer, Esquire's, drab summer waistcoat her first deliberate shaft in the shape of a volume of Mrs. Browning, deftly parried by the tough targe of the 'Saturday Review,' with which (as the Sabines did the traitress with what they wore on their left arms) he somewhat overwhelms her, accustomed hitherto to the

pages of the 'Rock.' In a word, all goes well as in the golden time; — Cancer, Esq., is plainly on the point of declaring himself, when one dark morning of eclipse Miss Precise misses him on the accustomed hill, opera-glasses no longer reveal him sidling along the railings, nor huddled against the arm of a seat with the 'York Herald'; can it be the poor stricken deer has gone off in dumb grief alone into the greenwood to die, with Mrs. Browning, which he has forgotten to return? Alas, it must be so! 'Now will the poor wounded fowl creep into the sedge'—leaving behind him, too, a novel of Miss Austen's, which before his ill-mannered flight he has forgotten to reclaim.

Miss Emma Precise goes as near hysterics as perhaps a lady of fifty-seven ever does go. Such a man as Cancer, Esq., in her world pilgrimage she never yet has met with. Gentlemen with hard eyes and hooked noses and beards just turning grey, gentlemen with caressing manners and large signet-ringed hands, gentlemen with confident rolling voices and tight trousers and large knee-joints, many of these she has seen, spoken with, and had to fly from in maidenly terror; that description of elderly fortune-hunter which suggests the broken-down electro-biologist Miss Precise has had a large experience of. But a — Cancer, Esq., who flees her, a Cancer that drops out of her sky and wheels round to light another atmosphere, an independent Cancer, a heavenly body owning no system, regulated by no laws—why, that is something new to meet with at fifty-seven, and, half terrified at the skyey portent, what can she do but gasp and begin to cry a little? Still there is hope that — Cancer, Esq., is not utterly fled, not utterly broken up and merged in other systems, but only temporarily obscured; hope that he will write for 'Mansfield Park' and return 'Aurora Leigh'; but the days pass and the Spa crowds begin to thin, the lights of the band grow gusty, and the leader conducts with his collar up; the leaves fall, the schoolboys are back, and the swallows circling in doubt; it is the end of September, and still no sign, no glimmer of Cancer light, no sound from the vast sidereal silence, that, though the sea rise and fall as ever, begins to grow oppressive. Enter here the Confidential Agent, summoned to the Regent's Park, where, sleepless as Caligula, wanders Miss Emma Precise from chamber to chamber, peering at the heavens and calling frenetically on — Cancer, Esq. Find him, Confidential Agent, she cries, find him and bring him to me! Fly to him, dive giddily and swoop headlong round his

gilded eaves, chirp to him and twitter twenty million loves; fly to him and tell him that I love him. I, Emma Precise, prepared from henceforth and now, at this moment, to share with him Brighton in November and the sluggish horses in brass harness, panting round the Madeira and back again to Hove. Fly to him, go! and for excuse take him back his book, 'Mansfield Park.'

Not much of a clue this, 'Mansfield Park' only with *Cancer* written in it, and all the people of the globe in whose society the owner may meantime have lost himself! But the money is inexhaustible, and the *carte blanche* the size of a sheet of the old bed of Ware; and blithe and buoyant off trips the Confidential Agent on his search, leaving the lorn Emma at home as dripping in tears as the bowed autumnal laburnum in the grey October mist on her Regent's Park lawn.

The Confidential Agent sweeps the face of the heavens with a patience that is an enthusiasm, and after many nights and many days there at last, tucked away in a snug corner of Worcestershire, he gets a glimpse of — Cancer, Esq., hunting wirily five days a week, and running up to town on the sixth, to take up his abode in Bury Street, and his meals at the Conservative Club. Unexpected, rather, this! for the Confidential Agent in his mind's eye had fashioned at the most of Cancer a sturdy solicitor or the keeper of a provincial museum, or, largest and widest of all, a solid merchant of the City of London with a Pembridge Square house; and, behold, a country gentleman—*ay, and ratalorum!*—a country gentleman of fine estate and good family, to whom from a spinster of the Regent's Park, old and unattractive, he, the Confidential Agent, has to carry a proposal of marriage, nothing more nor less. Awkward and delicate! However, as we have written, the Confidential Agent will do most things for which you pay him, and, true to himself, he does this, or attempts it.

To Crabtree Hall, then, five miles from Bingley, in Worcestershire, he drives in the smartest of all the 'Red Lion' flies, and noting the lodge and the park as he goes along, the many swinging gates in the winding drive, the clumps of fir, the bracken and the rabbits, glimpses even and flashes of dappled deer; with a certain nervousness at the great hall door (with '*Vestigia nulla retrorsum*' over it) he asks for Mr. Cancer, and, with scarce a moment to compose himself, is shown to him straight, and with 'Mansfield Park' under his arm is forced to plunge at once into his business. He finds him in a room like a hothouse, tenderly

waiting on an ancient father, who, with carefully shiny boots and a good book upside down in his lap wrapped in a red handkerchief, sits close to the fire; so deaf that, apparently, he has missed death's summons—only said 'Eh?' to him!—so blind that he has never seen him shake at him his dart.

Let us, if only for Emma Precise's sake, cut short this painful interview, at the most sum it up in a few words. Cancer, Esq., Junior, remembers Scarborough perfectly, of course, and Miss—What's-her-name?—Precise, yes!—and now what is it? A book he lent her; oh yes, to be sure!—very good of Miss Precise, but quite unnecessary. And a book she lent him?—that he had totally forgotten—abominably careless!—and, oh that we should have to write it, the ink at the end of our pen positively blushes! but when the Confidential Agent, stuttering, unfolds the rest of his tale, makes clear the offer of Miss Precise, Cancer, Esq., Junior, fairly or unfairly, bursts out laughing.

We can write no more. Greek-motherlike we avert our face, hide it in the folds of our dressing-gown, and over the return of the Confidential Agent and the scene in the Regent's Park draw tenderly one of our ample embroidered skirts, which let no man attempt to approach or tamper with.

This appears to be the most humorous, the most effervescent of our packets; and with this it appears likely we shall have to be content, during the telling of which, as though precious time were being wasted, the red mouse sits scornful, and with a hollow drub beats her glowing little paunch; and when it is done, an unearthly glitter in her tiny scarlet eyes, flicks her tail impatiently and imperiously across another bundle of the papers, and with a wave of her thin paw directs us to open and read.

Ah, a somewhat wider breath in this, a suggestion here of the *haute politique*! Intrigue, it is true, but intrigue not altogether so pitiful, so bald, so stuccoish as that of the London squares and the London suburbs; but with certain distant glimpses and flashes of a glittering Lutetia, who with her cymbals cracked, her chaplets torn, at this time lies panting in the muddy grip of the invading Teuton. As we open the packet we hear her send across to her ancient enemy shrill passionate cries for help! 'Surely ye who have *flânés* along my boulevards will not thus suffer the asphalt of them to be thus ploughed and torn with shot and shell? nor ye who have cried laughing in the Palais Royal permit the beds of the wounded to line thus pitifully the *foyer*

and the corridors? At least send us money to prolong the struggle!’

Papers, these, that require the gentlest tissue handling, for here the names of the great begin to peer out on us, here world names are beaten from one side of London to the other as from a battledore. Let us tap them so fast that the bewildered spectator cannot read the name on each as it flies, that to the quickest eye it appears simply as a long blurred line of indistinguishable letters.

Lutetia, as we say, shrieks thus in her strident voice for money, and, balloon-wise, over the *cheveux-de-frise* of Teuton bayonets, and far above the prick of the Uhlan lance, that shriek sails to us, till in intelligent businesslike form, with due and proper mention of percentage, it takes Threadneedle Street shape, becomes accepted and ratified with libations; Threadneedle Street agreeing to dine with the adventurous *aéronaut*, M. Paul, and his ambassador at his hotel in St. James’ Street.

So far it is plain enough, and further, observe, pray, that we have written some dozen lines or so and no mention as yet of anything approaching a *teterrima causa*; what need, then, of the Confidential Agent? Patience! for already swishing round the corner we can hear the *frou-frou* of her dress—already the tap of her bronze heel along the hotel passage. Patience! she will be here in good time, she is here already. Madame Paul, the intrepid *aéronaut*’s wife, descended in a right line from that flower-plucker, walker on the grass borders, and fence destroyer, Mother Eve. And there beside her at her elbow, guardian of the garden, appears the Confidential Agent, cane in hand and gold band round his hat.

Madame Paul has also left Lutetia, edging her way through the bayonets and tripping with a shudder past the rain-stained tents, under the protection of a certain dangerously slim *attaché*, and beneath the shadow of his embassy passport, who having done his cavaliership across the Channel, presumably leaves her at the hotel door of St. James, with the simple courtesy, *Madame, au plaisir de vous revoir!* Presumably only, alas! And she should have been at the dinner-table head to cheer the countenances of the City magnates and wink her bright eyes at the beaded bubbles of their champagne. But at seven o’clock no Madame Paul, nor yet at half-past, nor yet at eight, when, alas! they sit down. Madame appears to have left the hotel at five, and certainly at nine has not yet returned; no, nor at half-past

eleven, when the last of the heavy City merchantmen, each of them giving the impression of being hall-marked on every cable-link, drags himself away, and M. Paul, no longer able to contain himself, can at last give his anguish vent and tears off *ventre à terre* to the Confidential Agent.

'*Cherchez ma femme!*' he cries to the astonished man, blinking at him out of his first sleep, '*cherchez ma femme!*' and with his two fists in his eyes stamps and raves about the candle-lighted room.

Let us pass over the scene that follows; it is certainly very painful, and few are there but red mice that care to listen to the transports of outraged husbands—the cries, the sobs, the oaths. Sufficient that the Confidential Agent, heavy with sleep at one in the morning, though with a certain knowledge of what he is talking about, promises M. Paul that by five to-morrow his wife shall be with him, or that at the least he shall know where to lay his hand upon her, if of her own accord she will not come.

By nine o'clock next day the various reports of the Confidential Agent are in the master's hands, among them those of the watchers round the hotel in St. James's Street; for ever since the war broke out, certainly ever since Lutetia has been in the toils, no foreigner of note leaving the country but has been spied upon, no individual has passed the lines but that individual's subsequent movements have been well known and reported instantly to the Teuton Government, in whose pay is the Confidential Agent; scarcely, indeed, a commercial traveller has landed at Dover but his features have been scanned and the Teutons have learned within four-and-twenty hours whether he has gone to Windmill Street or Castle Street with secret papers, or home to his faithful wife and his wedding-cake ornament under glass at Camberwell. No wonder, therefore, that the Confidential Agent knows something of Madame Paul and Mr. Protocol, and makes the promise he does, though, as he confesses to himself in the morning, somewhat hastily and rashly. By nine o'clock he learns from the report of his watchers that at five the preceding evening Madame Paul jumped lightly into a hansom waiting at the corner, in which hansom was a gentleman in waiting, also that the hansom drove Piccadillywards and there—well, there? Well, there, at the Circus was lost sight of. Now, was ever anything ever so unfortunate? The Confidential Agent sets himself down to brood, and knowing something of the past career of the dangerously slim young

attaché under whose chivalrous escort Madame Paul threaded the Teuton maze, knows something too of his present life, and strongly suspects the gentleman in the cab to be identical with the gentleman who carried her so carefully through so many dangers, and left her at her husband's side with the mere polite '*Madame, au plaisir de vous revoir.*' This Mr. Protocol, be it said, he has never seen, but from his photograph, which he has had occasion to study, knows him perfectly.

Down, then, he goes at once to hunt after the lost cab, whose number, of course, he possesses, and, happy fortune!—*O nimium fortunate!*—there along the shady side of Piccadilly who should he see strolling but surely Mr. Protocol, and when he gets closer, not a doubt of it—Mr. Protocol!

The Confidential Agent meets him with outstretched hand. 'Mr. Protocol, my dear Mr. Protocol, how delighted I am to see you! how long it is since we met!' Into which little trap Mr. Protocol tumbles, sufficiently at any rate for the Confidential Agent to see he is right, and while the *attaché* protests he does not know him and never saw him before, evidently beginning to suspect, the Confidential Agent holds him tight in dexterous parrying easy converse, and only suddenly turns on him with the abrupt question, 'Mr. Protocol, where is Madame Paul?'—giving him, till then, scarcely time to breathe.

The sallow cheek of Mr. Protocol grows an indescribable unpleasant colour. 'I don't understand you!' he stutters.

'Where is Madame Paul, sir?' reiterates sternly the Confidential Agent; 'where is she, sir?' and again Mr. Protocol, the brass of him beginning to blink and harden, mutters he does not know what he is talking of, never saw him before, and would pass on. But the Confidential Agent will not be denied, takes him by the cuff, and draws him with the magic power of the Ancient Mariner into the courtyard of the Albany. 'Mr. Protocol, Mr. Protocol,' he says, almost in mirth, 'this is not Lutetia, sir; the laws and customs of Lutetia go here for next to nothing, except perhaps contempt. This is London, sir, be good enough to remember, where, though you may steal a man's wife, if you be scoundrel enough, yet you must not steal her clothes, which are her husband's property, remember. This is not the Rue de Rivoli, sir, but Piccadilly, where at one bound, from being the hero of the romance and hurry of an elopement, you may find yourself the next moment rubbing your eyes at Bow Street under the fearful

spectacles of Sir Thomas and a committal for theft! Now, sir, to escape that police constable, tell me, where is Madame Paul?' And the miserable Protocol, the curdled milkwhite of him changing now to a dingy mottled green and yellow, carries the Confidential Agent in silence northward, where in the dim neighbourhood of Euston sits Madame Paul, working pale at a trifle once destined for M. Paul, but which will now do equally well for Mr. Protocol. Just in time, that fortunate meeting in Piccadilly; three hours later would have found them fled to Liverpool, and the next morning ploughing the muddy waters of the Mersey, past the booths and swings of New Brighton.

At a glance the Confidential Agent sees with whom he has to deal, the *femme à trente ans de Balzac*, and takes his measures accordingly, begs Mr. Protocol to wait for him below while he has a quarter of an hour's quiet talk with Madame Paul, and knowing, as we have said, this Mr. Protocol, having in fact the *dossier* of him pigeon-holed at home, he unfolds it in speech and lays it before the startled eyes of Madame Paul in all its startling combination of black and white. Of course she will not believe: what woman ever will believe she has been deceived? her pride, her vanity, perhaps her inexperience—how many hundred films are there not that thickening finally go to blind and deafen her? That Mr. Protocol is a common cheat, a cheap Mephisto of diplomacy, she will not, dare not believe. It is all a trick of M. Paul to get her back—M. Paul who does not understand her, who wearies her—she will not go, she will not believe, she will not listen!

Then the Confidential Agent plays his last card, though well knowing the flimsy futility of it with such a woman as Madame Paul. 'You will go to New York, Madame,' said he; 'you will go to Washington, to Saratoga; you will go here and there, and in all M. Protocol will remain with you about a month—not more, I give you my word. In his care will, of course, be the keeping of all your money, all your jewelry, everything of yours of any value; and within a month he will leave you, carrying off everything of yours on which he can lay his hands, and you will be left alone there, Madame, *plantée là*——'

'*C'est faux!*' shrieked Madame Paul, rising furious. '*Je n'entendrai plus. Henri!*'

'*Plantée là,*' calmly resumes the Confidential Agent, 'in the heart of America, alone and deserted. For such a day, which, as sure as I am here, Madame, will come to you, take and keep this

note of fifty pounds, which I am directed to give you ; conceal it from Mr. Protocol ; money is always useful, and even if he stays with you who knows what may happen ? while, if my words should come true, when you find he has really gone and your eyes are really opened, buy a railway ticket with it, pay with it your passage-money, and return to your husband. It is impossible such a heart as his will ever be entirely closed against you.' And, frightened and subdued by the Confidential Agent's manner, Madame Paul takes the note trembling, or rather does not repulse it, but lets it lie there on the dingy lodging-house table-cover.

'Meantime,' says the Confidential Agent, 'sign, Madame, pray, this piece of paper, abandoning through it all power over your daughters. They must now be, of course, entirely and completely your husband's ; your authority over them must to-day absolutely come to an end.' And the cowed Madame Paul signs, with her teeth chattering, and the Confidential Agent buttons the paper inside his coat and bows himself away, not without sadness and foreboding ; with a side glance at Mr. Protocol trimming his nails over the blind in the room below, as he goes into the street.

In the evening, at five, he goes to M. Paul. 'Your wife is found, sir,' says he to him. 'I do not bring her with me, for she will not come, but I know where she is.' Poor M. Paul is humbled and stricken when he hears it all. 'You are rid of a bad bargain, sir !' cries the Confidential Agent to the poor man with his bent shoulders. 'I know all about Madame ; she is not the wife for you ; she never has been fit to be the mother of your children. You are free of her now, and I give you my word it is best !' And to M. Paul he gives a few facts about this *femme à trente ans*—which, of course, he has long known and duly docketed—that at once straighten the bent shoulders with indignation and throw a dry fire into the eyes that just now were wet with tears. In the end, mastering himself, M. Paul avows his eternal obligations to the Confidential Agent, swears never to see Madame again, even if of her own free will she return. 'Ah, sir !' interrupts the Confidential Agent, who knows his own and the human heart better, 'don't be too hasty ! you are both of you yet young, before you both there is yet a great deal of life. Madame will repent, you may depend upon it, and repent bitterly ; I saw to-day some indications of it.' 'Ah, mon ami !' 'And some day, M. Paul ; some day *quand vous n'êtes pas bien*, some day when your—what shall we say ?—aches—heart or stomach ?—some day,

believe me, when you are sighing for her, as some day you will, you will be only too happy to remember that, if she wishes it, she can return to you. She is not wholly and absolutely cut off from you, of that I have taken care—remember it !

And some day it was, some day not long after, when the cloven foot of Protocol did not prevent him decamping, as was foretold of him, with the speed of a common thief, with all of Madame Paul's of value on which he could lay his hands ; to whom only was left the fifty-pound note sewn into her stays ; unripping which, with cries and tears of rage, she sailed homeward with it back to France, and falling one night of summer across her husband's threshold, was tenderly raised by him, and till her death, not long after, tenderly cared for. For it is at once the glory and the shame of love that is true, that there is no offence, committed or to be committed, that in the torch fire of the god cannot be consumed ; no troubling of the flame that ever can extinguish it ; no blasts, no tempests that, rage upon it, furious as they will, do not, after the wreaking of their worst, yet leave it burning as steadily, as devotedly as before. 'How can you love your wife if she deceive you ?' asked of him one of Molière's friends ; 'if a woman once deceived me, that fact of itself would make me cease to love her.' 'Ah, my friend !' sighed Molière, 'in saying that you tell me you have never really loved.'

Note, by the way, that from Madame Paul, in desultory conversation held before parting, the Confidential Agent learnt the exact day up to which Paris was victualled, and of which important date the beleaguering force were soon in possession. Madame Paul had wheedled it out of—never mind whom !

Some hour or other there booms upon us now into the low-browed room from Westminster, but what it is we neither of us can tell, nor either of us scarcely notice ; for in the eyes of the Confidential Agent there beams the light of old triumphs, old successes, and in ours a curiosity that this side of midnight will not easily be quenched. 'More stories, oh Confidential Agent !' we cry ; 'more of your adventures !' to which, as though the glaring vermin heard, the red mouse answers with a shrill cry, and, leaping an inch or two in the air, alights on this !

Deep in the calm cherry-heart of Kent, far even to this hour from the fluster of railways, deep only among hops and cows of oast-houses, lies mouldering the long low country-house of the once great family of the Tanquerays. We have no time to trace

their decadence from the Tanqueray of James the Just, who went to seek his fortune at Whitehall and found it there, lying chiefly in apostasy and on the ledges of the backstairs; nor to give in detail all their present poverty, of money, of intellect, of influence, and, in the true sense, of blood; it is enough to say that the best of the Tanquerays lie and kneel in Ightleigh Church; above, around, and below the circular pew where, with its green baize table and its stove, to-day the thin-faced, red-haired head of the house stands with his stiff neck, and makes pretence to worship. His ancestors may sleep in peace if they can; it is with him and his wife that we are now concerned.

For well nigh a century the Tanqueray heir has gone to Rugby and thence to the bar, chiefly to qualify himself for the bench of magistrates, to have that stamp upon him which once was put on Justice Shallow—and most, perhaps, when he fought with Sampson Stockfish, the fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn. For that three years reading for the bar, those three years of lodgings in Half-Moon Street with the old family butler, was all of life the Tanquerays ever could afford to taste, all of freedom they ever knew; and wild though these three years often were, no Tanqueray had ever yet carried a trace of them down to Ightleigh. They heard the chimes at midnight in their own fashion: some loud, some low, some fast, some slow; but, having heard them, they were quite content for the rest of their lives to hear the bell for prayers at ten o'clock at home instead, and the cracked clock over the tumble-down stables as they lounged upstairs at eleven. The present owner is the first of the line who has ever dared—Why, you have only to look at the present Mrs. Tanqueray to see with one glance of your experienced eye that she is as much out of place in Ightleigh as a milkmaid of Herrick's would be at midnight in the Strand. *Pauca verba.*

Down to this Ightleigh comes the Confidential Agent, another strange figure among the hop-poles and the oast-houses, down he comes on a Tanqueray summons to get at the inner sense of a robbery that has just been perpetrated at the great house and that entirely baffles the penetration of the local force. A burglar in Ightleigh—masks, revolvers, and stocking-feet—impossible! And yet Mr. Tanqueray, going into his wife's boudoir somewhat late in the afternoon, finds the door locked and, just about to force it, is confronted by a mask and a revolver, both of which go past him with cool determination, out into the night and dis-

appear. With a trifling booty, only, that is the strange part—only a trifling booty out of all the old Tanqueray jewels on which hands might have been laid. A London thief, evidently, says the local police; disturbed; and off with what he could get. Softly! answers the Confidential Agent; softly, not so fast; I have other theories. Leave me, my brothers, I beg, for an hour or two to wander in the park this fair spring morning, to cool my hot London brow and to think!

Shall we give the results of those woodland deliberations on that fair spring morning, with the cuckoo shouting at the Confidential Agent, and the Confidential Agent saluting the loud bird with a polite wave of his high London hat? Surely, since the first Tanqueray of James the Just laid the first red brick at Ightleigh, no stranger figure has ever kicked aside the heavy bracken, no bolder contrast between the old and the new has ever terrified the innumerable rabbits with their flashing stubbs of tails, so accustomed to velveteens, so alarmed at a frockcoat. Two hundred years divides precisely these two personalities, Whitehall of James and Strand of Victoria—Ah! shrills the red mouse, but suppose you tell them who was the burglar; for, after all, that's what they want to hear, and not—Oh, the burglar? Well, the burglar appears to have been an old lover of the wife's, a survival of the old London existence; and it was her theatrical instinct had hurried him off in the manner above, with a diamond star in his pocket for her to wail over, duly returned later by post; that's what he was, and those were the results of the woodland deliberations of the Confidential Agent.

No tale that we have had as yet so much delights the red mouse as this. She beats again, this time in ecstasy, her glowing paunch with her crumpled little fists, and could we bend but low enough, small doubt that we should hear the gurgle of inextinguishable laughter, as she throws back her pointed head and well-nigh weeps with mirth. An old lover! among the hop-poles and the oast-houses, in the calm cherry-heart of Kent, where there should be by rights naught but the crack of the merry carter's whip, the whisper of happy lovers by the murmuring mill wheel; the hiss of the serpent and the beast's flat-head parting the ivy leaves that cling round the Tanqueray coat over the hall-door, the slimy undulations over the honourable motto! An old lover! and in this Kentish paradise?—oh, shame!

It is here the mention of the firearm that suggests to us the

question whether in all these schemes, intrigues, adventures, the Confidential Agent has ever gone in any fear, in any danger; had ever found himself, for instance, opposite the round naught of a revolver-barrel, with the mute notice of *no further*, the mute direction of *back!*—the journey come to nothing, ending in an explosive *cul-de-sac* if persisted in?

In answer—yes! As a family man the Confidential Agent was once certainly desperately frightened by one of the most desperate villains ever vomited out of a Continental slum—and in this way. In the good city of Frankfort the Confidential Agent, seated once at the opera there, drumming his fingers to ‘Nobil Signor,’ with a friend, superintendent of the Frankfort police, turns his head and his glass and sees behind him one Rink, well known as the boldest thief in Europe, and at that very moment wanted for a great bank robbery in Vienna. He sees him, he is sure of it, and so nudges and whispers his friend the superintendent, who also turns, but with a laugh declares, ‘No!—not Rink—certainly not—not even like him!’ But the Confidential Agent is sure, from Rink’s manner, which begins to be uneasy, and from many personal signs; for in his *moments perdus*, what more agreeable occupation has he than to study the photographs of those who are wanted, especially those wanted badly? this way and that, sideways and upside down, through a microscope even he studies them, until he learns every turn of the face, every peculiarity; and, under whatsoever disguise they may be, never fails to recognise a brow, a nose, a mouth, that in all probability in life he has never set eyes on. So though on Rink till this moment he has never set eyes, he is certain it is he, and proposes there and then to arrest him. Not on the authority of the superintendent! but there in one of the boxes sits the director himself, and while the nuns are limping in their ghastly revels in the convent church, the Confidential Agent pays the box a visit, introduces himself, gets the necessary order, and determines there and then to execute it.

To be brief, they pursue Rink to his hotel, and there, bluster and fume and foam as he may, they manage to secure him, and—proof of his identity—there in his portmanteau light on a flimsy bundle of notes, scoring up to the tune of 14,000*l.*, proceeds without a doubt of the great robbery of the Vienna bank. Rink at last—secured, to the joy and envy of all police Europe, by the sharp eyes of the Confidential Agent. Photography, as the ‘Times’ heads an article on the capture, *photography the best*

detective—after all! The same Rink, who was afterwards tried at Vienna, gets twenty years in the fortress of Schaltz, on the Danube, and before his removal from the dock finds time to turn on the Confidential Agent there in court, and swear with a horrible oath that out of Schaltz he will climb or crawl, throw himself or fly, and, once only free, make it then the business of *his* life to take that of the Confidential Agent. In which, perhaps, there does not seem on first glance to be much, mere wind and fury signifying nothing. The threats of criminals, declares Vidocq, who had a large experience of them, are scarcely worth the air into which they are breathed; for a criminal thinks of plunder, not of murder; he is after money, not your life; and though, if you prevent him or stand deliberately in his way, he will do his best to kill you, he will not, as a rule, go in search of you merely to gratify revenge. As a rule! but Rink was an exception. The most desperate criminal, the most determined prison-breaker, the coldest cruellest villain that ever lied to or cheated man or woman—to have such a man on your track, to have such a man swear to kill you, was enough to make the blood of even the Iron Duke run cold! Much more that of a Confidential Agent and a family man, who in both capacities bought himself a weapon of defence, and began to keep with care to the better lighted sides of the streets. In the meantime, Rink safe, thank heaven! in Schaltz; Schaltz that overhangs, inaccessible, the beautiful blue Danube; safe in Schaltz, fourteen hundred feet above the water's edge, in which blue water a peach-stone from Rink's cell window might be dropped with ease; safe at present, but for how long?

Comes to the Confidential Agent one black afternoon a certain Dr. Drogue, a Frenchman with a large *clientèle* among rogues—for rogues must at times be doctored; the devil himself, you remember, at times is sick—a large *clientèle* among that floating class of foreign scamp that robs hotels and cheats tradesmen, and marries and deserts poor suburban heiresses; comes to him and says, owing him a good turn, 'Take care of yourself, *mon ami*; see where you go these next few weeks. Yesterday Martin and Franke left London for Schaltz, with a scheme for Rink's escape, with whom they have managed to be in communication this month past. He will be sure to break through; you know no prison in Europe has ever held him for long, and his first visit will be to you, he has sworn it. Take care of yourself—mind, I give you warning!' The Confidential Agent's hand trembles as he writes a telegram to the governor of the fortress Schaltz, to be on the watch for

two men who are on their way there to assist Rink to escape and in an hour or two receives the laconically scornful reply, 'Thanks, but there are not often escapes from Schaltz.' No, not often escapes from Schaltz, nor often Rinks in durance vile there! for, lo! within six-and-thirty hours is flashed to the Confidential Agent the appalling message, '*Rink entfloh diesen Morgen aus Schaltz*'—Rink escaped this morning from Schaltz! Escaped this morning? and here to-morrow, or next day at the latest? then Heaven help the Confidential Agent! And now, in Aristophanes' fashion, rather *παρὰ προσδοκίαν*, comes to the reader what most will feel to be a disappointment, though to the Confidential Agent an undoubted relief; for, though Rink did indisputably escape, out of Schaltz infirmary, where he lay, with the sympathetic help of the nuns—never was there a man who could easier twist a woman to his will!—though he escaped and got clean away and never was recaptured, he never came near the Confidential Agent; and from that day to this, beyond a terrible fright, has never done him any manner of harm. Nay, more, from that day to this has never even been heard of; in the remotest, faintest echo, either for good or for evil; but with his ferret nose in the air has apparently stepped sheer off the edge of the world and vanished; perhaps to break with aerial burglary into some great fixed star, or trouble the placidity of the shimmering milky way with strange and monstrous crimes.

One more tale of a rogue, wholesomely baffled by the Confidential Agent in the very nick of time; and though the papers are still deep as autumn leaves about our feet, and still there is life in the red mouse, yet we must cease from their perusal, for the night deepens and broadens and our space narrows. This, then, is the last.

The Count d'Alberg, with fair whiskers and moustache and fair hair centre-parted, desires to ally himself with a highly respectable, almost distinguished, family at Richmond; the connecting link to be the attractive and only daughter, who is blest with a neat little fortune of fifteen thousand pounds. One day there visits the Confidential Agent a gentleman to consult him in the matter of this same Count d'Alberg, to inquire if anything be known of him, his family, his pretensions to nobility; if, in short, there be any reason why as *amicus foci* he should forbid his banns of marriage with the Lass of Richmond Hill? whose head being somewhat turned by the flash round it of this foreign coronet has discarded the inquirer, with no other recommendations, unfortunately, than his fidelity and a strict attention to business,

neither of them qualities of the flash-dazzle order. Exit the Confidential Agent to consult his *dossier*, with the strong notion of finding in it something distinctly to the Count's disadvantage, the *dossier* in this case being the *Allgemeiner Polizei-Anzeiger*, a mysterious paper that circulates among the police of the world, in which are notices of the careers of rogues wanted and rogues secured and disposed of, with in many cases their photographs, and in all their personal marks and peculiarities. Among them, sure enough, the Count d'Alberg, and in the *Allgemeiner Polizei-Anzeiger* many reasons why the banns of marriage should be forbidden with the Lass of Richmond Hill. Cast your eye for one moment over his *dossier* and see if it be not so.

The Count d'Alberg, alias de This, de That, and d'Other, aged 30, height 6·2½. Here follow personal marks and peculiarities. *Filius nullius*, he was born in Dublin, and from the age of eight years has been in and out of prison as often as the meteorological figure of the man is in and out of his little house, which, as all know, is as often as the weather changes. Convicted at eight years old of robbery, at fourteen of robbery with violence, at sixteen of burglary, at twenty sentenced to transportation for a great robbery at Liverpool, where five of them got clear away with 17,000*l.*, and might have had it till this day had they not, as thieves do, quarrelled over the division and so let in the police upon them. Capture, transportation, escape, &c. &c.; *quid plura?* Enough here surely to prove that the Count d'Alberg is scarcely the man for the Lass of Richmond Hill, his scarcely the arms to carry her off amid the rustled congratulations of every hamadryad in the park, nor his scarcely the career to be brightened by the charms of *this lass so neat, with smiles so sweet!*

There is to be a dinner-party at Richmond that evening to introduce the Count d'Alberg to the family and relatives of the lady he has won so impudently, and down to that dinner-party journeys the Confidential Agent, the guest of the inquirer of the morning, who, as an old lover to whom something is due, finds no difficulty in introducing him in the house, nor in introducing him to Count d'Alberg, to whom the Confidential Agent bows, and talks distantly about the weather. After dinner, the ladies gone, the Count's health drunk, scarcely are the heel-taps vanished, when 'Excuse me, Count,' calls to him from the other end the Confidential Agent, 'but will you tell me how you spell your name? I knew some one of your name once.' And the Count spells it with a touch of defiance in his voice, having, with the

rogue's keen instinct, scented here the presence of an enemy. 'Ah!' replies the Confidential Agent, incisively, 'did you always spell it that way? Did you never spell it—so?' rapping out one of the Count's many aliases. Dead silence, the Count pale as death, glaring and swearing he does not know what is meant; the guests wondering what is coming, who the unknown is, the old lover enchanted. 'Or so?' repeats the Confidential Agent, rising, with another alias, 'or so?' with another and another. And are you not this, and did you not do that? And, in one word, how dare you be here in England, in Richmond, when you should be lagging your time in the colonies, doing odd jobs about the verandahs and mending the station fences?

Terrible consternation, the Count d'Alberg appealing with yellow lips to his host to protect him from insult, from the blind charges of intoxication; stutters he never saw the man before, cannot guess to what he refers, rises as though to put an end to it and go into the drawing-room. 'Before you go into the drawing-room,' dauntlessly cries the Confidential Agent, 'come into the next room with me, and I will show you the marks you have on you that will prove I know what I am talking about. Come, that will settle it, once and for all!' But the Count has had enough, will do no such thing, will be insulted no longer; and, making his way unsteadily to the door, half bows to the company and goes out into the hall. Followed by the old lover, who never was so radiant, and who, with the Confidential Agent, sees that the Count takes his right hat, opens the door for him, watches him down the drive out into the utter blackness; and returning executes a *pas seul* of rapture on the door-mat, that turns out to be the first of his marriage festivities with the charming Lass of Richmond Hill. *Sic semper prædonibus!*

If, as we have written, there were more of the night for us and of these pages we could make a palimpsest, no end would there be to these stories, nothing could stop the flow of our pen; for the packets still lie in numbers about our feet, among which the red mouse still leaps and flickers in ecstasy, inviting us to go on and tire not. For see, here you have a man ridded in the most cunning yet simple fashion of an importunate woman; here a gentleman relieved of a lady whom in a moment of expansion he had offered marriage to, and who chased him over two continents to make him fulfil the promise; here a cheating groom captured and convicted in a manner almost laughable, if crime ever be laughable; here the story of a child in a cab, handed out through

the window to new parents purchased for gold ; here a veritable mystery of a Derbyshire village that still wants an explanation—here, in short, still lie waiting the telling half the stories of the troubles, intrigues, and miseries of a great city ; half the revelations of that which, though so many call it life, by many more is better recognised as death. *Ex pede Herculem*—from what we have written, the rest of the *immane corpus* will be easily guessed at.

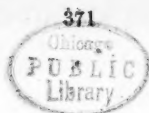
Of the work the Confidential Agent does, and the way he does it, of the men and women with whom he deals, of the Confidential Agent himself, those who read between the lines, those who from what is said gather what is not, will by this time have some shrewd idea. They should know, however, as indeed they may surmise, that there are, of course, degrees of them. There are Confidential Agents as eminently respectable as the nature of their calling will permit, and Confidential Agents as precisely the reverse—which also the nature of their calling will permit. There are men, honest men, doing a legitimate business, such as it is, and men who are nothing of the kind ; men who come and go from the tops of the high Strand houses, who are wanted by the police or who have been and have eluded them, who haunt low race meetings and betting public-houses ; men who, when they are in trouble, lie low until the air clears, and then reappear in sealskin waistcoats to open new offices and begin afresh. In short, as in the case of the stories we have told, it must appear that in some the Confidential Agent has behaved well and in others ill, that in some his flight has been as straight as the arrow from the bow and in others as crooked as that of a bird with one wing ; so in the calling itself it is clear that there are Agents whose methods are consistently good, and others whose methods are as consistently bad ; for, naturally, what we have written is not the actual extract of one individual, but the essence of them all, the good and the bad, stirred, seethed, and skimmed in one huge Warwick porridge-cauldron.

As we stroll homewards down the thronging Strand, now full of clustering, pushing theatre-goers, there is a new interest for us in regarding them, a new speculation as to how many among them are at this moment drifting into the hands of the Confidential Agent, weaving him a skein to unravel and untie, knotting together their hands and their feet, and with their mouths offering him a knife to sever the cramping-bonds. To the superficial ordinary eye, how commonly vacant, commonly

good, commonly bad, commonly respectable, commonly uninteresting, do not all these ordinary faces look ; but under these ordinary suburban, omnibus, tramcar exteriors, consider what passions, what vices, nay, what crimes, are perhaps at this very moment at work, boiling and bubbling and frothing. To the ordinary eye what is there more honest, simple, mirthful, than Hogarth's Laughing Audience? but to eyes trained and developed by the Confidential Agent—why, our pen shakes and quivers at the thought of what we now believe those obstreperous groundlings capable—the revenge, the scheming, the intrigue! Laugh as they may now, with their wigs off in the July heat and their cheeks laid against the pit spikes to cool, how long will it be before they are whining in tears, lying, grovelling, cheating, backbiting?

But shall we believe the Confidential Agent? Is, after all, all that he tells us true? Why not? Who can pretend to have probed the height and depth of good and evil of which human nature is, or may one day be, capable; who can say that all the stories have been told, all the combinations and permutations made; is humanity *un homme fini* beyond which there is no advance; have the heights of virtue, the depths of vice, been completely scaled and explored; in a word, does nothing remain for humanity in either direction to accomplish? The completely good, the completely bad, does not as yet enter into most men's philosophy, gives no indication of existence, unless it be upon the stage; but that most perfect and brave Christian gentleman, Colonel Newcome, has his moments of unreason and irritation, and the most sombre of our villains will cry over children or canaries, and whip round on the reading of a poem or even the striking of a clock, from forger and murderer clean round to churchwarden. So that still, it is clear, in both directions, up and down, much remains for us to do; heights of virtue to be trod more firmly, profundities of vice to be more completely enjoyed, more determinedly adhered to. And of these two *magna opera* the Confidential Agent appears to us in the latter direction to have done and still to be doing something, in the way of an assurance of the existence in life of some one really wholly bad, without one tiresome redeeming virtue, one annoying civilised inclination or taste.

Not one redeeming virtue, or shred, or hint of one; a figure wholly and entirely black—just think of it. *Tiens, c'est joli!* as the Frenchwoman cried on first sight of St. Peter's at Rome.



COURT ROYAL.

A STORY OF CROSS CURRENTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING,' 'MEHALAH,' ETC.

CHAPTER XLIX.

AN APRIL FOOL.



GREAT change had come over Lazarus. Whether it dated from the sprouting of the moustache, or from the conference at Court Royal, and the final imposition of terms on the great family, could not be determined by Joanna with nicety. She thought that the change began with the moustache and ripened after the latter event. Lazarus was elate. Old Cheek had retired without interference, and, now that his heart was lifted up, he was more

liberal than when he consented to an occasional bloater. Indeed this liberal tendency had swelled into large proportions. He had not shrunk from saddle of mutton with onion sauce, nor from fillet of veal with stuffing, nor from sirloin of beef and Yorkshire pudding—only at pork he had drawn a line, for he was strict in his Hebraic prejudices.

‘Have pig’s puddings if you like, Joanna. Don’t let my inclinations bar your way—yet, perhaps, such is the delicacy of your feelings, you don’t like to eat and see me fast.’ He spoke thickly, making strange efforts with his mouth to get out the words.

‘What is the matter with you, Mr. Lazarus? Your speech is queer, and your appearance changed——’ Joanna stopped short,

and stared. Lazarus opened his mouth. He had provided himself with a double set of artificial teeth.

'I thought I'd electrify you,' he said. 'Yes—I've had my jaw taken in hand by an artist—a dentist. Cost me a lot of money, Joanna, the charge was outrageous—a fancy price as for an object of vertu. But, so long as it pleases you, I don't care.'

'I wish,' said Joanna, 'that you'd be more particular about your hair, Mr. Lazarus. You make your pillow as black as if you used your head for a flue brush.'

Lazarus looked down.

'You used to have grey hair.'

'Not grey,' said the Jew; 'just a speckle here and there—like wood anemones in a grove.'

'But now your hair is glossy black. Don't use your head again on the chimney. If you object to a sweep I will use a holly bush.'

'It is not that,' he said, humbly.

'Then what is it?'

'Dye,' he replied, with deepened colour,—a coppery blush. 'Dye that costs me five shillings. I've gone through a course of Zylobalsamum and Eau des Fées. There, Joanna, if I blacken my pillowcase I am sorry. Henceforth I'll tie a black silk handkerchief round my head when I retire to bed.'

'What was that concern I found on the chair in your room, this morning?'

'My stays,' whispered the Jew.

'Stays!' echoed Joanna.

'Call it corset,' said Lazarus. 'It sounds more aristocratic. My figure wants it.'

'What next?' asked Joanna, contemptuously. 'Are you coming out in knickerbockers and a Norfolk blouse?'

'I don't like irony,' said the Jew; 'it hurts my feelings, which are ticklish as the soles of my feet. Joanna! what say you to a picnic? A jaunt to Prince's Town, on the moors, in this brilliant spring weather, and a look at the convicts—so as to combine moral edification with pleasure?'

'I should like it.'

'You shall have it. Express a wish, and I fly to fulfil it. I have even forestalled your wishes. I've invited the old lady from the ham and sausage shop to join us as a sort of chaperon, you understand.'

‘When is this to be?’

‘On Sunday, when no business is doing. A carriage and pair, in style. It will cost a lot, too, but what of that, if it give Joanna pleasure, and the mountain air bring roses to her cheeks, and the sight of the prisoners inspire her heart with virtue.’

‘Why have you invited Mrs. Thresher?’

‘As a chaperon. But,’ with a chuckle, ‘if it would suit you better, Joanna, to come alone with me, I’m—as I always am and must be—agreeable. The weight will be less for the horses. The ham and sausage woman weighs ten stone before her dinner. Not that we shall be charged less for going without her—but we shall have to feed her out of our pockets. There is that to be considered. If I order a dinner at six shillings, and there are only ourselves to eat it, we shall consume three shillings’ worth each, whereas if Mrs. Thresher comes we shall be limited to two. That has to be considered. However, it is for you to decide. I’ll regulate my appetite by your decision.’

As Joanna said nothing, he added, ‘There is another point worth weighing. If the ham and sausage lady comes, I must sit with my back to the horses; that makes me bilious, and spoils my relish of the victuals. Where you pay you expect to relish. It wouldn’t be etiquette to set a lady rearwards to the horses, would it? But no—I’ll manage. We’ll have a wagonette!’

‘There’s one thing I should like above every other,’ said Joanna; ‘that is, to go to the ball.’

‘The ball! But I can’t be there.’

‘That will not affect my pleasure. You have spoiled my fun more than once. I was to have gone to a grand dance at Court Royal, but could not, because of your affairs. Now the spring ball is about to come off, and I should dearly love to be there.’

Lazarus rubbed his head, then looked at the palm of his hand, upon which the dye had come off.

‘Joanna,’ he said, ‘you don’t consider. These balls are very select; only ladies of the county families, and the wives and daughters of officers. No second-rate parties there—’

‘I don’t want to go to any second-rate affair. The best, or none at all.’

‘But I don’t see my way to manage it. You’d want a chaperon, and the old lady from the ham and sausage shop is not quite, as the French put it, cream of the cream.’

'I remember that you once told Mr. Charles Cheek that you could send me to any ball you had a mind to, and no lady dare refuse you.'

'I was romancing,' said the Jew; 'I'm by nature an Oriental, and prone to soar into poetry.'

'I will go,' said Joanna, decisively.

'I can't find the way to do it,' answered Lazarus.

'Very well; go to the moors with Mrs. Thresher, eat your three shillings' worth. I will remain behind.'

'Oh, no, no, Joanna! I've set my heart on this excursion.'

'And I have set mine on the ball.'

'I'll see about it,' muttered the Jew.

'I shall not give a thought to the moors. You need have no dread of sitting with your back to the horses. You can lounge in the back seat with Mrs. Thresher.'

'Joanna! I would not go without you. My body would be on Dartmoor, but my soul would remain at the Barbican. If you could see inside my heart,' he said in a pathetic tone, 'you'd behold your own self curled up there—like a maggot in a hazel nut. But there, I'm launching into poetry again.'

Joanna vouchsafed no remark. He sat and watched her, but she showed no symptoms of relenting.

'I'm not now what I once was,' he went on. 'Then I had an object before me for which I toiled and stinted. Now that object is attained, and I need stint and toil no more. Hitherto life has been to both of us a time of privation, now it shall become a holiday. I will deny you nothing on which your heart is set. I have money in abundance, and as you have helped me to make it, you must help me to spend it. If you want rings, take them from my drawer. Chains and bracelets are at your disposal. Select what gowns you like, they are all yours.'

'Go to bed,' said Joanna; 'the whisky has got into your old head.'

After that she would not speak to him. He made many attempts to draw her into conversation, but all failed. When he was about to retire to rest, he stood in the doorway, the picture of distress, and sighed, and said in a soft tone, 'Good-night, Joanna.'

She poked the kitchen fire savagely, and said nothing.

'Won't you say "good-night" to me who've been so kind to you?'

Still no answer.

‘I’ll think about the ball, Joanna.’

Still obdurate.

‘You—you shall go to the ball, Joanna.’

‘Good-night, Mr. Lazarus.’

The change in the Jew’s manner caused the girl uneasiness. She was shrewd enough to see what it meant. He had fallen in love with her after a peculiar fashion. For a long time he had used her as a drudge, as a mere slave, without compunction what he laid upon her and how hard he treated her. By degrees he came to realise the value of her services, and he began to ask himself what would become of him were they withdrawn. Where could he find a substitute? She had grown into his ways, to understand his requirements, almost to think his thoughts. She had been educated in the business and comprehended it thoroughly in all its parts and turns. Then, when he had come to appreciate her worth to him, Charles Cheek appeared on the stage, admiring her, hanging about the house, and threatening, as the Jew feared, to carry her off. Alarmed at the prospect of losing her, his eyes opened to the fact that she was grown to be a woman, and a beautiful woman. He grew jealous of the visits of young Cheek, and jealousy, bred in self-interest, awoke a sort of monkey-love in the old man. His wife was dead and he was free.

Joanna did not, perhaps, read all that passed in his mind, but she read enough to be uncomfortable in his presence, and to repel his advances with decision.

She used his infatuation as far as served her purposes, but she kept him well at bay. Several times when they were together, she noticed that he was working himself up to a declaration of his sentiments. The sure sign of this was his helping himself repeatedly to the spirit-bottle. When he did this the girl left the kitchen, and did not return till his courage had evaporated.

Formerly the Jew had drunk nothing but water, only occasionally mixed with whisky. Of late he had enlarged his doses, not of water, but of whisky. He sometimes pressed her to take hot spirits and water, to sip some from his glass, on the pretext that she had taken a chill, but she steadily, even rudely, refused.

Lazarus was disagreeable enough in his earlier bearish mood, he was worse in his later loving mood; and, in spite of the increased comfort in the house, Joanna would gladly have returned to the

former state of affairs, to be freed from his ungainly and irksome amiabilities.

Joanna was not happy. She had not seen Charles Cheek for some time, nor heard more of him than a report brought by Lazarus, that he had been to his father and that the old man had forbidden his return to Plymouth, the scene of so many follies.

The day fixed for the excursion to Prince's Town broke brilliantly.

Dartmoor is a high barren region, rising from two to three thousand feet above the sea, towering into granite peaks, broken by brawling torrents. In the heart of this desolate region, and in the most desolate portion, in a boggy basin devoid of picturesqueness, stands the convict prison of Prince's Town, above the line where corn will ripen and deciduous trees will grow; often enveloped in vapour, exposed to every raging blast from the ocean.

To pass from the warm, steamy atmosphere of Plymouth to the cold and bracing air of Prince's Town, is almost a leap from the hot into the frozen zone. The drive was delightful. Joanna and Mrs. Thresher sat facing the horses, and the latter talked of the drop in the price of pork and the quality of imported bacons, during the greater part of the way. The Jew occupied the position that disagreed with him. Joanna entreated him to change seats with her, but his gallantry was proof against her solicitations. He cast yellow, malevolent glances at Mrs. Thresher, who made no such offer, which, had it been made, he would have accepted. He maintained his place, sitting sideways, and his face became momentarily more sallow. He wore a straw nautical hat, with a blue riband about it with fluttering ends, and in golden characters on the front, an anchor and the name 'Nau-sicaa.' His black vest was very open, exhibiting a starched white front set with coral studs, and a black tie à la Byron slipped through a cornelian ring. Over his waistcoat dangled a massive golden chain, and his fingers were covered with rings.

As the unfortunate man became really unwell, the ladies insisted on his mounting the box. 'But then,' said he gallantly, 'I am turning my back on the finest view,' and he bowed to Joanna and raised his cap, exposing a very discoloured lining.

Joanna enjoyed the drive, especially that part of it when Lazarus was not opposite her, getting yellow in face and grey in lip.

She did not talk to Mrs. Thresher; she was not interested in

American bacon; she was engaged in looking about her, at the views, the hedges, the rocks, the rushing stream that danced and feathered over the granite boulders. The hedges were starred with primroses. Here and there they were white, and here and there pink. The larks were singing and twinkling high aloft, the busy rooks were cawing and flashing in the sun-light, looking sometimes white. From the beech-grooves came the liquid coo of the doves, and the gush of the throstle's song, and the fluting of blackbirds. Nature teemed with music, poetry, and the exuberance of life. Only one thing lacked, thought the girl, to make the day perfect, Charles Cheek should have been there with his joyous humour and lively prattle. At length they reached Prince's Town, and ordered dinner at the inn. Whilst the meal was in preparation, the holiday makers wandered about the prison, and watched the warders and the convicts.

'This is very improving,' said Lazarus. 'It screws up our morals like the tuning of fiddles. You see, Joanna, the miserable end of men who allow themselves to be found out.'

After dinner, Joanna slipped away, to be alone in the wilderness, and inhale with long draughts the sparkling air that pours into the lungs like atmospheric champagne. She climbed a height, and ensconced herself among the piles of granite, away from the cold wind, in the glow of the glorious sun. To the south lay Plymouth harbour and the glittering sea. Fold on fold of blue hill stretching away for miles to the rugged peaks of the Cornish moors lay to her right.

As she sat in her nook, believing herself alone, she was disturbed by a head with a sailor hat protruding itself from behind a rock. In another moment, Lazarus was before her. He threw himself in the short grass at her feet, picked a rush, and nibbled at the end.

'Joanna,' he said, 'why did you run away? Why did you leave me with old Thresher? What do I care for old Thresher? I brought Thresher to-day as gooseberry picker. In the upper walks of life, to which we are going to belong, gooseberry pickers are the thing. Young people must have them as incumbrances when out junketing. I've left old Thresher examining some pigs fed by the warders off the scraps left by the convicts. Did you mark how the old lady ate? I did. It was a race between us; especially over the roly-poly pudding. She didn't want to have the doughy end without the jam, and I was determined she

should. A roly-poly has but two ends, not three, so two must have ends, and only one can enjoy the middle. I was resolved that you should have the best part, and that Thresher and I should have the ends. I cared for your interests above my own, you'll allow that, Joanna. I took one end, and Thresher pulled a mow when I gave her the other. Did you see it? But you had the middle, oozing out with whortleberry jam; and that shows, if demonstration were needed' (he lowered his voice), 'how I regard you. I wouldn't have done that in the old days, would I?'

'No, sir!'

'And let me assure you of this, Joanna, the round globe does not contain another woman for whom I would do it now.' He took off his hat, and exposed his forehead scored with a black ring. 'I hope you see, Joanna, what a change has taken place in my feelings towards you. You may have noticed in me the wakings of tenderness of late. Ah, Joanna! do me a favour! You saved my house from fire, my property from burglars, my throat from their murderous knife. Save now my heart from despair. I offer you my hand; let us walk together down the flowery path of life, with the roses blushing in our way and the doves cooing over our heads, and with plenty to eat and drink on the journey. Spend, Joanna, what money you like, eat what dainties you desire, dress in what clothes you fancy, and picnic when and where you will. Oh, Joanna, "O that we two were maying," as the song goes, together through life without a Thresher at our side as a sharer of our pudding. Cease to consider me as your master, and accept me as your husband.'

Then Joanna burst into a ringing laugh.

'Too late, Mr. Lazarus, too late! — not permissible after twelve o'clock.'

'What do you mean?'

'This is the first of April, and you are trying to make of me an April fool.'

'I am serious. I protest, most serious.'

'Then,' said she, 'it is yourself that you have succeeded in converting into a most egregious April fool.'

CHAPTER L.

TO THE RESCUE.

MR. CHARLES CHEEK was supposed to know nothing of the difficulties of the family, till Lady Grace spoke to him so plainly on the subject. He had, however, heard something from the steward, whose mouth could not keep silence, and his father had told him plainly what he knew. From Mr. Worthivale he heard of the fresh trouble caused by the death of the Archdeacon. Nothing further had passed between him and Lady Grace. She was friendly, and he remained fascinated. There it stopped.

Lord Saltcombe had at last been roused to take a decided step. The General told him of the Duke's objection to the sale of anything, and of the necessity under which they lay of at once finding money. The honour of the house was at stake, and the Marquess visited his father, and was closeted with him for an hour.

When he came out, he went at once to the General.

'The Duke will allow me to act independently; but he desires to be spared particulars. My hands are set free to raise money, but he is not to be consulted how it is to be raised, nor told how it was done when the money is raised. As we want immediate cash, let us have the plate and jewelry overhauled, and get rid of what is not necessary. There is that confounded set of diamonds I bought for Dulcina Rigsby. They cost twelve hundred, and I dare say will fetch two-thirds. As for the family jewelry—I shall never marry, and so the race will expire with me. No Duchess of Kingsbridge will need them. My mother was the last. I have the key to the safe where they are kept.'

'Let us begin at once, and pack what is not in immediate requisition.'

Lord Saltcombe rang the bell for the butler, and ordered the plate chests to be taken into the state drawing-room, not now likely to be used again; also the cases brought there that would be likely to serve for the packing of valuables. Mr. Blomfield obeyed without a muscle of his face working, and soon the grand room was filled with boxes and piles of silver plate, old salvers engraved with arms, supporters, and coronet, punch bowls, centre-pieces, goblets, christening and caudle cups, urns, kettles, tea and coffee pots, ewers, candelabra,—a mass of metal, much of beautiful workmanship.

'That,' said the General, 'is the great silver salver presented to the Field-Marshal by the City of Ghent, of which he was in possession at the time. He was not Duke then; you see the fulsome inscription in Latin. This must be melted up. It will never do to have it sold as it is, to proclaim the straits to which the Eveleighs have been reduced.'

The butler and the footman packed the plate in the green cloth-lined cases. In former times it had been transported with the Duke to town and back to the country. Consequently the proper conveniences for the reception and removal were ready.

'Is not this beautiful?' said the General, pointing to a silver teapot on a lampstand of exquisite workmanship. On one side were represented Chinese picking tea leaves, on the other Chinese ladies sipping the beverage made from them. The groups were enclosed in the most delicate shell and flower work. With it went a cream and a milk jug, and a silver canister, all of equal beauty of workmanship. 'This set belonged to George the Second,' said the General; 'he gave it to the Duchess Lavinia on her marriage.'

'Here is my christening cup, out of which I used to drink as a child, and there are the marks of my teeth on it,' said Lord Saltcombe, with forced gaiety.

'This cream bowl ought to be valuable,' remarked Lord Ronald. 'I never saw anything like the delicacy of the work, the festoons of roses and jessamine, with butterflies perched on them. Fortunately the arms are not on it. I suspect it is unique.'

Tray after tray was filled with silver forks and spoons, soup-ladles, great gravy spoons, enough to furnish a Lord Mayor's banquet.

When all the silver was packed that had to be sent away, and the rest, that was to be kept, was laid on the floor, the porcelain was collected.

'Fetch everything from my room, Robert,' said the Marquess; then with a laugh, 'I have been disenchanted with some of my prizes, and doubt the value of the rest. I dare swear I have been egregiously taken in. Anyhow, there can be no questioning the value of these Sèvres vases presented by Charles X., and there is abundance of precious Oriental china all over the house.'

The room was now filled with splendid bowls, great standing vases for pot pourri, old Dresden figures, Chelsea in abundance, majolica dishes, Capo di Monte white groups, superb specimens of Palissy, services of Crown Derby, Swansea, and Wedgwood, of the

most choice and exquisite descriptions. Chimney-piece, plate chests, the floor, were encumbered with them.

The Marquess himself went to the jewel chest, and brought in as much as he could carry. He laid on the table a tray of crimson velvet on which sparkled a tiara, necklace, stomacher, and earrings of diamonds.

'My mother wore these at the coronation of Her Majesty,' said Lord Saltcombe; 'she lost one of the diamonds out of the brooch, and never wore the set again. The place of the missing stone was never filled up; perhaps that was the first symptom of difficulty in finding money.'

A beautiful chain of white pearls with pendants of black pearls attracted his notice.

'How well this would have become Grace,' he said. Then he brought in more, a complete parure of amethysts. Then rings—diamond, topaz, amethyst and diamond, ruby. These splendid ornaments seemed in the cold daylight to have lost their sparkle, and to be sensible of the general sorrow, decay, and humiliation.

'The pictures must come down,' said Lord Saltcombe. 'The Rubens at Kingsbridge House can be disposed of to the National Gallery, which is short of examples of that master.'

'Will the nation care to spend thousands on fleshy Dutch-women? I doubt it.'

'Some of the paintings in this room are valuable,' said the Marquess. 'Let us have them down, and they can be measured for their cases. That Murillo was bought by the first Duke off the easel of the painter. These Gerard Dows are more interesting than beautiful. There is an Adoration by Porbus, with Philip II. and Alva as two of the Wise Men. Here is a Turner purchased by my father, undescribed by Mr. Ruskin.'

'The Reynolds' portraits—what of them?'

'We will not part with family pictures if we can help it. Let them remain suspended. There is a large Morland with its clump of dark trees, and a pretty Gainsborough, a fine example and worth a large sum. These must certainly come down.'

Lord Saltcombe and the General were standing in the middle of the room, which was strewn with treasures. Most of the silver was packed, only that left out which was reserved for use. The china was about, some being packed in hay; the jewels in their trays were spread out on the tables; the pictures were unhung—

when—the door opened, and Lady Grace entered with Mr. Charles Cheek and Lucy.

Lady Grace saw in a moment what was being done, and coloured and stood still. Lucy also understood the situation, and was seized with a fit of trembling. The occasion of their entry was this—Charles had said, in the course of conversation, that he had never seen the state rooms, whereupon Lady Grace, unaware of what was taking place, had volunteered to show him through them.

‘Packing for removal to town,’ said the General. ‘Rather late in the season, but better late than never.’

Charles Cheek was not deceived. He drew back. He was moved. It was sad to see the break-up of a noble family, to stand, so to speak, beside its deathbed. He withdrew from the room at once, and halted on the staircase outside the door, and with agitation in his voice and face and manner, he said, ‘Lady Grace! will you give me a right to fly to your assistance, and prevent this humiliation?’

‘Yes,’ she answered with calmness, ‘I will.’

That night Charles Cheek hastened to town by express that reached Paddington at 4 a.m.

He was at his father’s house before the old man was up, and he awaited him in the breakfast room. Charles was in a condition of feverish excitement, in spite of his cold night-journey. A servant had taken him to a room where he had washed and changed his clothes.

The old man came in, spruce as ever, in his black cloth frock coat, a white shirtfront, stretching his arms, and then rubbing his hands.

‘Governor!’ exclaimed Charles, ‘I have been waiting to see you these two hours and a half, burning with impatience. I have something of importance to communicate.’

‘Ugh! Want money?’

‘No—that is—not for myself.’

‘Ugh! Still—want it.’

‘That is not my primary reason for coming here.’

The old man puffed himself out and stood by the fire, winking and rubbing his hands, and glowering at his son.

‘I have just returned from Court Royal. I have spoken to Lady Grace, and she has consented—’

The father shook his head doubtfully.

'It is a fact, governor, I give you my word. She gave me the promise in the presence of Lucy Worthivale. Some time before she all but promised, but yesterday she was explicit.'

The old man rubbed his hands vigorously, thrust his arms forward, flashing his cuffs, then hiding them again.

'By Ginger!' he said, 'what a chap you are!'

'Do you mistrust me?'

'Mistrust? No. I didn't think you equal to it, though. You are a fine fellow, that you are. The girl has sense. Ginger! she'll make a Lord Charlie of you.'

'Hardly,' laughed Charles; 'the wife does not ennoble the husband.'

'Don't she? She should. We'll change the law. Make it a political question. Don't tell me she'll flatten down into Mrs. Charles Cheek!'

'Not quite that. But never mind. We have not got to that point. I want you, father, to act promptly. I have come by night express, and must return to-day.'

'What do you mean to do?'

'You will remember what you undertook. The family are in immediate want of money. If you are satisfied with what I have done, give me leave to stop the sale of their valuables.'

'What! Got to that pass! A galloping consumption. When I undertake a thing, I do it; I'll take up the mortgages to the tune I scored, but I won't tear them up till the marriage is accomplished.'

Charles explained what the immediate need was.

'Very well,' said the old man; 'give me a bill of sale on the furniture and plate and pictures, and I'll advance the money. I'm not such a fool as to give without security.'

That was the utmost Charles could obtain from his father.

'There is no knowing,' said the old man. 'The young woman may mean right enough, but the aristocratical relations may interfere, and blow themselves out with pride, and refuse consent; then—what about my money? As for the mortgages, I'll see to them at once. Those of Emmanuel shall be taken up immediately, and when the registers are signed, I'll tear them to shreds. As for ready money, I'll advance something on the stock-in-trade, but only if I have a bill on them to enable me to seize in default of fulfilment of conditions.'

Charles was obliged to be content with this. He returned the same day to Kingsbridge.

'You've had a long journey,' said Mr. Worthivale. 'I was amazed when told you had gone to town. Nothing the matter with your father, I hope?'

'Nothing at all,' answered the young man. Then, after looking inquiringly at the steward, 'I say, do you recall a certain conversation you had with my father?'

'Bless my soul! he overflowed with conversation, and every word was precious. To what do you particularly allude?'

Mr. Worthivale knew very well what was meant, but he was reluctant to have this topic retouched. Lucy had told him nothing. With his ideas, the suggestion of old Cheek had seemed to him a sort of blasphemy.

'Well,' said Charles Cheek, 'it has come about after all. Lady Grace has passed her word to me.'

'Stuff and nonsense.'

'It is a fact. I went up to town last night to communicate it to my father. If you are in immediate need of cash he will advance it on the security of the contents of Court Royal and Kingsbridge House.'

Mr. Worthivale coloured.

'Lady Grace! Impossible.' The steward was stupefied. 'Why, you are nothing, literally nothing, one of the people; and your father is in'—with a shudder—'trade!'

'I assure you it is so. Ask Lucy. She was present.'

'You misunderstood her. It is impossible. Sheer impossible. Your head has been turned. I ought never to have introduced you.'

'I repeat; she has consented.'

'But—the Duke—and the Marquis—and Lord Ronald, what will they say?'

'They have not been asked.'

'You had better not ask them. As you value your happiness and my regard—don't. For Heaven's sake, don't.'

'Mr. Worthivale, excuse me, but you seem to think that the advantage is all on my side. Yesterday Lord Saltcombe and Lord Ronald were packing the valuables to be sent to London for sale. There is therefore desperate immediate need of money. I come offering to relieve them from their difficulties—at least from those most urgent. The mortgages to the amount of two hundred

thousand pounds will be taken up by my father, and on our marriage he will give them over. The pictures may be rehung, the plate unpacked, the jewels and china replaced. I do not know what the sum is in immediate requisition, but my father is ready to advance it—so long as it is under ten thousand—on receipt of the consent of the Duke and the Marquess to the contents of these two houses, of which you will furnish a list, being the security for the sum.'

'Not a word of this to them! Lord Saltcombe will never forgive me. My goodness! What presumption there is in the rising generation! To them nothing is sacred! I suppose, sir, you are a blazing Radical?'

'I have no political opinions, having nothing to gain or lose.'

'Leave this matter in my hands,' said the steward. 'I will see the Duke. I will manage about the bill. I must rush off now, and stop the packing of the pictures and the carriage of the plate. I was to have gone to town with all the things, and done my best with them.'

'You are welcome to arrange with the Duke about the bill, but I cannot have you interfere between me and Lady Grace.'

'I—I! I would not dream of mentioning it. You have been deluded.'

'Who by? By Lady Grace?'

'Heaven forbid. She is incapable of falsehood. By your own inordinate vanity, which has deluded you into hearing things that were never said and seeing things that were never done. It is impossible. As soon make me believe the common people here when they tell me they have seen the sun dance on Easter morning.'

Worthivale said no more. He was convinced that the young man had dreamed. It mattered little. The immediate advantage of the dream was great. The precious collections of Court Royal were saved for a time. Time was what he wanted. In time the Marquess would marry and shake old Cheek and all other Old Men of the Mountain off his shoulders who weighed him down and plucked the golden fruit and left him starving. In time Bigbury Bay would become a rival to Torquay, and make the Eveleighs as Torquay had made the Palks. In time the slate quarries would rout all other slates out of the market. In time the shale would distil petroleum. What mattered it, if for a while the young man were left dancing in darkness with

bandaged eyes? He would some day see his folly, and blush at his temerity.

Meantime—Providence was interfering for the salvation of the Eveleighs.

CHAPTER LI.

THE FLYING-FISH.

JOANNA carried her point. She went to the ball. She had set her heart upon it. No dissuasion would turn her from her purpose, no difficulty discourage her. Go she would, and go she did.

The Easter ball was qualified by selectness. If it was nothing else, it was select. On this it prided itself. The most rigid censorship was exercised over the admissions by the committee. No one without blood, or—this was a concession—money was allowed. The committee sat at a table, and the names were passed from one to another. It was like running the gauntlet. Only those that came out unscathed between the lines were allowed to appear. The nobility and the county families patronised and attended it. The Earl and Countess of Mount Batten, Lord and Lady Laira, Sir John and Lady St. Austell, patronised the ball, and gave it the stamp of selectness. The generals and their ladies, the admirals and their parties, all the J.P.s and the J.P. fowl attended, and added their insistence to its selectness. The ball was so select that it hesitated to admit the womankind of marine officers and marine artillery officers. A select few of very superior marine officers were allowed to creep in, with a deferential air, and dance all night with their coat-tails between their legs, and a smile of humble thankfulness on their faces that they were allowed to caper in such select society. The ball was so select that no lady with the soil of trade on her fingers could hold them out for a ticket. It was so select that, of the Church, only the wives and daughters of rectors might enter; the females whose orbit is in a Peel district, and revolve about vicars and curates, were shut out. It was so select that the family of the wine-merchant were as rigidly excluded as the family of the pastry-cook who united with the wine-merchant to furnish the supper.

On the Cornish coast folk say, when the wind wails at the

windows, that the ghosts of drowned sailors are without, flattening their spiritual noses against the panes, dabbing their dripping palms against the glass, weeping because excluded in wind and rain from the warmth and light within. Outside the great assembly-room, the spirits of unnumbered women wept and wrung their hands. The ball was too select for them. Let them dance on their own low levels, and not aspire to circle in the system of the social planets.

This Easter ball was quite a different affair from the October and the hunt balls, when the room was occupied by cliques, and the cliques danced together, ignoring the cliques below them, and went to supper and ate in cliques, and talked in cliques, and flirted in cliques, and clacked in cliques. This ball was emphatically a one-clique ball.

Yet, into this most select of balls Joanna thrust herself. This was how it was done.

Mr. Lazarus had lent money to the Hon. Mrs. Yellowleaf, and he sent her a note to say that unless the loan were repaid by a certain date, he would County Court her.

Mrs. Yellowleaf came down to his private office in great trepidation. She had not the money; she was in daily expectation of a remittance from an aunt. She entreated Mr. Lazarus to delay. Mr. Lazarus was inexorable. He wanted his money. He had heavy bills to meet by a certain day. Mrs. Yellowleaf had promised repeatedly to repay the loan, and had not done so. His patience was exhausted. He was a poor man, he had put himself to great inconvenience to find her the money; if she could not or would not pay, he must cast her into court, and if that failed he would put in an execution. Mrs. Yellowleaf turned green at the threat, and nearly fainted.

'I cannot find the money,' she said—'I simply cannot. My husband, as you know, is with the China squadron. My remittances have not arrived. My aunt is very kind, but she is out of humour with me just now, and I dare not press for more.'

When he had reduced her to a condition of abject despair, then only did he offer relief. Relief could be bought—but on hard terms. She must take under her protection to the ball a young lady who particularly desired to attend.

The Hon. Mrs. Yellowleaf was aghast. This was a sheer impossibility. She *could* not, she *would* not run such a risk. The tears came into her eyes. She knew nothing of the 'person,'

neither her name, nor character, nor antecedents. The ball was most select. She might get into serious social trouble by taking there an individual unqualified to associate with good society. There were so many denied admission whose claims were urgent.

‘Very well,’ said Lazarus, rising. ‘Then prepare to see your name in the West of England papers. You shall have your summons to-morrow.’

‘Who is she?’ asked Mrs. Yellowleaf, after a pause for consideration.

Lazarus explained that she was a Miss Rosevere, an heiress, an orphan, of irreproachable character. ‘No relations in Plymouth, none that I know of in Devon or Cornwall.’

‘What is she like?’ asked Mrs. Yellowleaf, doubtfully.

‘Like!—there won’t be one in the room will surpass her in looks, I can assure you.’

‘She is not—not an Israelite?’ She thought ‘Jewess’ might sound rude, so she said ‘Israelite.’

‘You need not fear. Not a bit. Cornish—comes from the dark lot down the coast by Veryan and Goran; dark hair, dark eyes, olive skin. She’ll be the belle of the ball, and the richest girl there too.’

The Hon. Mrs. Yellowleaf drew a sigh of relief.

‘Very well, Mr. Lazarus, if you will not press for payment, I will take the young lady. I trust she dresses well.’

‘Dress!—she’ll dress as well as the best, I promise you.’

So it was settled. Mrs. Yellowleaf was uneasy about her undertaking, but unable to evade it.

On the evening of the ball Joanna was seen into a cab by Mr. Lazarus. ‘Ah, lack-a-day!’ said he, as he shut the door on her, ‘I can’t go with you, but it ain’t possible. The sight of me in the assembly-room would be too much for the nerves of some folk there.’

The Hon. Mrs. Yellowleaf’s carriage led the way, followed by Joanna’s cab. The lady had just seen her in the hall. She was sorry that she had no place in her own carriage to offer Miss Rosevere, as her daughters and son went with her; if Miss Rosevere would follow in her fly, she would await her in the entrance or disrobing room.

Accordingly she saw Joanna when she put off her cloak and

shawl. She looked scrutinisingly at her, and was struck by her beauty. She turned sharply round, with motherly apprehension, and caught an admiring expression in her son's face. 'I wonder whether she be really an heiress!' thought Mrs. Yellowleaf. 'Possibly enough that, being a stranger, she may not have known any one to whom to apply.'

She thereupon softened towards the girl, and spoke to her amiably. Joanna had much less dialect than one of her status might be supposed to be infected with, for she had not associated with other girls at the Barbican. She had grown up alone, talking only to Lazarus, who had no provincial brogue. His English was passable. Joanna's was also passable, though not the language of perfect culture. Mrs. Yellowleaf knew, the moment she opened her mouth, that she had not the bringing up of a lady. A very few words sufficed. 'Ah!' she thought, 'some mining captain's daughter, who made a fortune in tin, and left it to her. She has money, but not breed. Still, she has money. After all, nowadays, money is everything.' That was to be her explanation, if asked about Joanna. 'My dear, an acquaintance whom I could not refuse asked me to be civil to the young lady. People are very inconsiderate. They ask you to carry parcels for them, and stand chaperon to all sorts and conditions of girls. It ought not to be done. As for this Miss Rosevere I know nothing about her, except that *elle est une bonne partie*, worth, I am told, but I do not know, three thousand a year.' That is what she would say. What she thought was, 'Three thousand will obscure bad intonation and grammatical slips.'

As she went upstairs she wondered whether it would be well to allow John-Conolly, her son, to take a fancy to the girl. 'Not,' she considered, 'till I know exactly her value.' Her father's will can be seen in the Probate Court for a shilling.'

She touched one of her daughters. 'My dear Lettice,' she whispered, 'if Mr. Charles Cheek should ask you to dance, be civil. It is true that his antecedents leave much to be desired, but he has, and will have, money.'

Mr. Cheek was there, much disappointed at not being able to appear in company with Lady Grace and the Marquess. Still, though debarred their companionship, Charles was not disposed to forego the gratification. He was becoming very tired of the uniformity of life in the country, and depressed by the cloud of troubles which hung over Court Royal. At first he did not

observe Joanna. But on going up to speak to the Hon. Mrs. Yellowleaf, and engage Miss Lettice for a dance, his eye met that of Joanna. A look of incredulity, then of blank amazement, then of amused delight, swept across his face. 'Halloo!'—he checked



himself when 'Joe' was on his lips, and substituted 'Miss Rosevere.'

'You know Miss Rosevere?' asked Mrs. Yellowleaf in trepidation. She had noticed the change of expression in his face.

'Oh yes! old acquaintances,' answered Charles, with his eyes still on Joanna, full of wonder and question.

‘Where have you met?’ asked Mrs. Yellowleaf.

‘At—at—the Duke of Kingsbridge’s—Court Royal,’ answered Charles, dashing at the first name that occurred to him.

‘How is the Duke?’ asked Joanna, with composure. ‘And dear old Lord Ronald. So grieved to see that the Archdeacon is dead. The blow must have been severe to his Grace. The brothers were so attached.’

‘Oh, well—that is, not very well. I am just come from Court Royal.’

‘Indeed,’ said Joanna. ‘And sweet Lady Grace, and Lucy Worthivale?’

‘They are well,’ answered Charles, puzzled beyond description. How did the girl know anything about the Eveleighs?

‘You were not at the Christmas ball,’ said Joanna, ‘when the Rigsbys were staying at the Court, and every one supposed Dulcina would become Marchioness. Yonder she is—with her coffee-coloured father. How tastelessly she does dress! I must go over and speak to her. Come with me, Mr. Cheek.’

‘Joe!’ he whispered, as he escorted her across the room, ‘of all wonders this is the most wonderful!’

‘Am I out of my element—the flying-fish among gulls?’

‘Not a bit.’

‘How do you do, Miss Rigsby?’ said Joanna, extending her hand. ‘I am afraid you do not recollect me; but we met at Court Royal during the winter.’

Dulcina looked at her uncertainly. She could not remember the face; but was that wonderful? She had met so many strangers at the Court. She was glad, however, to be recognised, and to have some one to speak to, as she knew few ladies in Plymouth.

The Hon. Mrs. Yellowleaf nudged her son. ‘John-Conolly,’ she said, ‘you see the plain-faced, gorgeously dressed girl that Miss Rosevere is speaking to. She is an undoubted heiress. Go and secure her hand for as many dances as you can. Be very civil to her, and bear in mind that you must either work or marry money.’

‘Mother, I’d a thousand times rather dance with that charming girl you brought here.’

‘Dance with both. Try to be struck with both, and let them perceive it; but be cautious with the Rosevere. Il me faut prendre des renseignements.’

'Who is that very striking young lady yonder?' asked Mrs. Fothergill, wife of a country squire.

'That,' answered Mrs. Yellowleaf, 'is a Cornish heiress. Between me, you, and the post—money made in mines. However, the Kingsbridge family have taken her up, and put the cachet on her. Lady Grace Eveleigh and the Marquess are unable to be here, owing to the death of their uncle, the Arch-deacon. As they could not come with a party, I was asked to bring Miss Rosevere. Very rich and handsome, though somewhat wanting in polish.'

'Joey!' said Charles Cheek, when no one was by to hear, 'this is roaring fun. You are the most audacious little rogue I ever came across. You thrust yourself in here—anywhere that you have a mind. And then—you extort a hundred pounds from my father! Oh, Joe, I have never thanked you for that. It was good of you. But conceive how staggered I was when my father ran up alongside without showing signals, and poured a broadside into me because I had got myself entangled with a little pawn. Put me down for a score of dances, Joe. I had rather dance with you than with any other girl, and talk of something different from the weather and the primroses.'

But this might not be. Joanna had no lack of partners. The rumour spread that she was a Cornish heiress—taken up by the Kingsbridge family. There was no question as to her beauty, or to her ease of manner and movement. Ease of manner was given by complete self-assurance. Ease of movement by the fact that she had lived all her life in slippers.

'Cheek,' said an officer, 'surely that is the girl I saw in the stage-box the night of that frightful accident. You went up and talked to her. We asked you then who she was.'

'Yes, and I told you.'

'You told us she was an heiress, and were disinclined to introduce us. It is mean of a man like you, with such prospects, to keep the heiresses to yourself.'

'You are too dangerous a rival,' answered Charles, laughing. 'But it is not true; I leave the field clear about Miss Rigsby.'

'What an uncommonly good-looking girl that is!' said one mother, against the wall, to another standard medlar. 'Not quite happy about her extraction, I understand.'

'Rather odd in speech, I hear,' answered the latter. 'But the Kingsbridge people have taken her up on account of her money,

and there is a rumour of the Marquess of Saltecombe becoming engaged to her, now he is off with Miss Rigsby. They could not come because they are in mourning, so they asked Mrs. Yellowleaf to be responsible for her.'

'Dear me! I had no idea Mrs. Yellowleaf was intimate with the Eveleighs. I hear queer reports about the Kingsbridge family—very shaky, I understand.'

'Ah, bah! Every planet has its occultations, and comes out of the shadow as bright as before. *You* never have known what it is to be in financial eclipse, I suppose.'

Joanna was dancing with Charles Cheek.

'You do not know how you are perplexing the old ladies,' he said. 'As for the men, they are infatuated. Take care, Joe, that you leave no joint in your armour open for an arrow to enter. Some of the markswomen will be spanning their bows at you before the night wears to day.'

'What a pity you were not at the Christmas ball at Court Royal!' said Joanna, without noticing his warning. 'I mean, of course, the first ball; the second was only for the tenants and servants. The room—the grand ball-room, you know it—was superb with its painted groups in panel, of the time of Louis XIV. It belonged to the older house, and was incorporated in the new mansion built by the late Duke. And the crystal lustres twinkling with rainbow-tinted light. And the drawing-room—do you know the pictures there? The Gainsborough, and the Murillo; the Sèvres vases given by Charles X.?''

'Joe!' exclaimed Charles, 'you will drive me mad. Are you a witch? Have you the gift of second sight? How come you to know anything about the rooms and people at Court Royal?'

'Never mind. I will not tell you.'

'I am cross with you for one thing, Joe. You might have been sure I would have been here to-night, and it would have been graceful to wear the Roman pearls I gave you. They were only Roman pearls, true, but the chain was pretty.'

'I could not. I had given it away.'

'Oh, Joe! how could you do that?'

'I gave it to the best of women.'

'Who can that be? I know one whom I think that.'

'It is the same. She has it—Lady Grace Eveleigh.'

Charles Cheek stood still in the midst of the dance. 'You gave my necklace to her!—Impossible.'

'Ask her next time you meet. She will tell you it is true. Now tell me something. How come you to know Court Royal?'

'That is easily answered. Mr. Worthivale, the steward, is my cousin. I have been staying with him, in exile—because of you. My father has sent me there into banishment.'

'That is why I have not seen you in Plymouth?'

'Yes—and—, I will confide something more to you that affects me greatly. You will hear it talked about shortly. I am going to marry Lady Grace Eveleigh.'

Joanna stood still, and stared at him. 'Impossible!' she said.

'It is true—I assure you it is true.'

'I will dance no more,' said Joanna, abruptly. 'Take me to a chair.'

'Remember, you owe me the next waltz.'

'I will not dance with you again.'

She remained seated during several dances; the gentlemen came round her, entreating her to honour them, but she refused all. She said she was tired.

At first Joanna was occupied with her own thoughts, and paid no attention to what passed about her, but she presently woke to the sense that she had seated herself in a wasps' nest. The ladies around her were faded beauties or mothers, and resented the arrival of a stranger on their preserves who carried off the beaux from themselves or from their daughters.

By slow degrees she was roused to give attention to the conversation that went on about her, and to become aware that words were flying around barbed and poisoned.

'Who is that child in pink yonder?' asked a handsome lady on the verge of thirty, who must at one time have been a queen of beauty. 'Can you tell me, Mrs. Delany? It is cruel to send children who cannot be over seventeen, and ought to be in bed and sleeping.'

The lady addressed sat on the other side of Joanna. Joanna looked sharply round, she was curious to see Mrs. Delany, in whose service she was supposed to have been so many years. That lady shrugged her shoulders contemptuously, and, returning Joanna's stare, answered the faded beauty.

'My dear, how can I tell? The ball has ceased to be select. What the committee can be about is more than I can answer, admitting persons of whom one knows nothing.'

'Is that worse,' asked Joanna, innocently, 'than giving cha-

racters to servants you have never seen? There was much talk of a lady having done this when I was at Court Royal.'

Mrs. Delany turned crimson, and sat back.

'I have known quite nameless, unknown persons give themselves out as friends of people of rank,' said a lady on the other side of Mrs. Delany, 'who turned out on inquiry to have been governesses or companions in the family.'

'I have heard,' said Joanna, 'of gentlemen so absolutely nameless nothings that they have had to borrow their wives' names and get knighted in them.'

The lady put up her fan instantly.

'What bad form it is, Lady Hawkins,' said the ex-queen, 'in unmarried girls wearing jewelry,' and her eyes rested on a necklet round Joanna's throat.

'I beg your pardon,' said Joanna. 'Is Mrs. Gathercole addressing me? I ask because I see you wearing a brooch I coveted the other day, but I was too late—it was sold to Captain Gathercole.'

She felt—she did not see—a shiver of suppressed laughter about her. The fading beauty turned dead white, rose, and left the place.

'What a pity it is,' said the lady who took the vacated chair, addressing Mrs. Delany across Joanna, 'that the possession of money should be deemed a sufficient qualification for admission! There are persons in this room who have no other right to be here.'

'But there are persons admitted who have not even money qualifications,' said Joanna. 'Persons glad to get a guinea from the Jews for a gown of old gold and black lace.'

The lady sprang up as if she had been stung, and Mrs. Delany burst out laughing; the old gold with black lace was well known.

'As for Cornish mines in which some people have their money,' remarked another, who had not spoken before, 'I am well assured that such property is unsatisfactory as castles in Spain.'

'Or,' observed Joanna, speaking aloud but addressing no one, 'or as husbands at sea, always at sea, but never seen, like the Flying Dutchman.'

In the midst of the silence that ensued, Charles Cheek came up and offered her his arm. She rose and took it. Her colour was heightened and her eyes sparkled.

'Good heavens, Joe! What have you been doing? You have set all the women against you!'

'The flying-fish can snap as well as the gulls,' she replied.

CHAPTER LII.

ON THE PIER.

WHEN Mrs. Yellowleaf was ready to leave, she intimated her intention somewhat curtly to Joanna. Charles Cheek at once flew to assist her to her cab and muffle her in wraps. Mrs. Yellowleaf's carriage was first packed and driven off. Then Charles said, 'Are you by yourself? That must not be. Allow me to accompany you to the Barbican, and see you safely home.' He waited for no reply, but stepped into the carriage beside Joanna.

'Oh, Joe!' he said, 'you have made mortal enemies. Your *mots* have been passed round the room, and those whom you stabbed will never forgive you. How did you know anything about Sir William Hawkins taking his wife's name, and being knighted in it, because he was—well, without a name of his own? And that affair of Captain Gathercole and Miss Fanshawe, and Mrs. Duncombe—whose husband never turns up—and the rest?'

'I know everything about people in Plymouth—it is part of the business.'

'You will never, never be forgiven.'

'I am not likely to meet these people again.'

'Did you enjoy yourself?'

'For a while—and then I did not care for the ball any more.'

'Why not?'

She did not answer.

The cab was dismissed at the Barbican, and Charles paid the driver.

'Joe,' said he, 'come on to the pier, and let us look at the water rippling in the moon. It will be dawn directly.'

She hesitated a moment, and then said, 'Very well; I want to tell you something.'

He gave her his arm. 'You are not likely to catch cold, I hope?'

She shook her head.

'The more I see of you,' said he, 'the more I wonder at you. You are a person of infinite resource. Joe! tell me you are not cross with me for what I confided to you.'

'Not a bit,' she answered. 'I told you to aim at position, and you have followed my advice.'

'It was my father's doing.'

'Do you not love and admire her? You must—you must do that! Why, I do! I love her still.'

'Of course I admire Lady Grace. Never can fail to do that. I love her also—well—in about the same fashion as a Catholic loves and adores the Virgin.'

'Are you satisfied with what you have done?'

'I will empty my whole heart before you,' he said. 'I know you are capable of advising me—of encouraging me.' He sighed. 'I daren't say all I think!'

She laughed. 'In the same breath hot and cold. You will and you won't. You can and you can't.'

'Do not sneer at me. I am in a difficulty. I assure you I have been mortally weary of the life at Court Royal Lodge. Old Worthivale, the steward, is a sort of cousin of mine, and infinitely tedious. Beavis, his son, is too occupied with the family failure to give me much of his company, and he has not that in him to afford me entertainment. I have hunted twice a week, but now the hunting is over. Five days a week I am consumed with *ennui*. I go to the club in Kingsbridge, and try to find some fellows with whom to play billiards, but sometimes no one is there: the day is fine, and they want to boat; or the day is wet, and they want to read novels at home over the fire. Then they all talk shop—local shop. They seem to me like a cage of animals bred in confinement, who can only think and feel interest and talk of the world within the bars of their cage. If I had not passed my word to my father, I would have run long ago.'

'Is there no attraction, then?'

'I allow there is Lady Grace. She is beautiful, sweet as an angel. She is kind to me, but never affectionate, and I cannot conceive it possible that we shall ever stand nearer to each other than we do at present. Of course we can be married, but that will not fuse my soul into hers and hers into mine, because we have so little in common. We have different specific gravities. When we are together, and I see her gentle face and hear her soft tones, I am under a charm which holds me—at a distance. The charm draws and repels at once. Can you understand? I feel that I love her, but I feel also that she is unapproachable by such as me. If we do get married, we shall be like a two-volumed book, of which the volumes belong to different editions, and are in different type and of different sizes. We shall belong to each other so far that we shall bear the same label, but she will

belong to an *édition de luxe*, and I to the cheap and popular issue.'

'Then why did you propose to Lady Grace? Was it merely to obtain position?'

'No, Joe. My father wished it, urged it, badgered me into it. I liked her, I cannot do other than like her. I pity the family. And then—the Worthivales put me on my mettle.'

'How so?'

'They scouted the possibility of my winning her. They seemed to regard me as the dirt of the street aspiring to the sun.'

'Do you think you will not be happy with her?'

'I shall go to church with her and never get out of it again. We shall carry the church with its solemnity and oppressiveness and mustiness into our married life. Our tendencies are diverse as those of a balloon and a diving-bell. We shall have as little intellectual sympathy as John Bright and a "Blackwood" which he was cutting and trying to read. I belong too much to Bohemia, with the city of Prague as my Jerusalem.'

'If that be so, you are in a false position, and must leave it.'

'I cannot,' answered Charles. 'I cannot do so without cruelty. The family are in straits for money. My father has undertaken to pay off the most pressing mortgages and debts. If the marriage does not come off they will be utterly ruined. Do you know, I stopped the sale of their pictures, plate, and jewels. All were being packed to send to London; when I got Lady Grace's promise I galloped to town on the back of an engine, and got my father to advance the necessary money to stop the sale.'

'Does Lady Grace marry you to save her family?'

'I do not know that she is aware of the compact—but—I suppose she must,' he added humbly. 'She never would take me for myself. The brazen pot and the earthen pot are going to float down the stream together, and we shall have to keep our distance for fear of jars.'

Joanna stood on the pier looking out at the promontory of Mount Batten that seemed to landlock the harbour. The moon was behind the citadel, steeping the Barbican in night, but the water beyond flashed like quicksilver. She folded her arms under her wraps. Charles tried to read her face, but there was no moonlight on it, and the pier-lantern was high above, casting a shadow over her.

'Well, Joe, what do you think?'

'Give me time to consider.'

'I am in this position. If I marry her I shall gain that which you have bidden me aim for, and shall have pleased my father, and saved a worthy family from utter destruction. On the other hand, I shall have sacrificed my independence and cut myself off from the rollicking life that suits me. I shall live in a social strait-waistcoat, and I hate restraint. If I do not go through with the matter I shall make the governor furious; he will never forgive me, and the Duke will go to pieces. Is it honourable and fair for me to back out?'

'No, Mr. Cheek, it is not. Go on,' said Joanna, and sighed.

'I thought you would say so,' observed Charles, also with a sigh, 'but I hoped that your advice would be contrary.'

Then neither spoke for some time. Far away, behind the hills to the east, the sky was beginning to whiten, but the moon shone so brightly that the tokens of coming day were hardly perceptible.

'We are old friends, are we not?' said Charles, sadly.

'Yes—we have known each other since last fifth of November.'

'What a time it seems since then! So much has happened that it is an age to me.'

'Also to me. To me it has been the change from childhood to womanhood, from outward hardship to inward suffering. It cannot be other. Mr. Cheek, we must part. We shall see each other no more.'

'No more!' he echoed. 'Nonsense, I intend to see a great deal of you when allowed to return from exile.'

She shook her head. 'It cannot be.'

'Why not? The Golden Balls is here, and the door open. If I choose to enter with a pair of silver spoons, who is to thrust me out? And if there be no customers in the shop, I suppose I may perch on the counter and enjoy a pleasant chat?'

'No,' she said, 'never again. You told me yourself you were going into social stays. You are changing your nationality, and about to forget Bohemia.'

'Not yet,—no—no! I will enjoy my freedom for a while longer.'

'There is a further reason why I cannot allow it,' she said, and looked before her into the dark water, and beyond it to the glittering sheet of wavering silver. 'I am going to be married.'

'Married! you—Joanna!'

Both stood silent, so silent that nothing was audible but the lapping of the water on the steps of the pier.

‘Joanna! I will not believe it. To whom?’

‘To Lazarus.’

‘Joanna!’ There was mingled pain and horror in his tone. She said nothing more, but shivered, though wrapped up well in shawls.



‘Come hither,’ said Charles, almost roughly. ‘The first time I saw you, I took you to the light to see your face; and the face I then saw has haunted me ever since. Come here, and let me see your face again. I will see if this be cursed earnest or cruel joke.’ He drew her within the radiance of the lamp, and turned the head up. She offered no resistance, but looked firmly at him.

There was no mischief lurking in the dimples at the corners of her mouth, no devilry in her eyes. There were dark lines in her face, gloom in her deep great irises, and set determination in her mouth. She felt that the hand that raised her chin to expose her face was trembling and cold. She was glad when he withdrew it, and her face relapsed into shadow. Perhaps she could not have maintained composure much longer under the scrutiny of his eyes.

‘I cannot help myself,’ she said in a low voice. ‘Judge for yourself if I can. Lazarus has resolved that I shall be his wife. I suppose he is afraid of losing me unless he ties me fast. But what can I do? I have no home, no father. I must wait here till my mother returns. I am number 617. I have been 617 in the shop for seven years. Everything else in the shop has changed, but I have remained. Old goods have gone, and new come in, and the same numbers have represented scores of new objects; only 617 has not changed. Some of the articles have been redeemed, but I have not. Some have lapsed, and I am lapsing. Some have been sold, and I am about to be sold. I remain uncanceled in the books, 617, and nothing can cancel me but the return of my mother or the expiration of my time. Here I must remain. I am not free. I dare not go. What would my mother say were I to run away? She would be ashamed of her child. What if she were to return, and I were gone, should we ever meet again? Lazarus would never tell her where I was if I had left him—even if he knew, just out of spite to her and me. But it is not that, not that,’ she said sadly; ‘I dare say you can’t understand me, but I feel it here’—she touched her heart. ‘It would not be right. I cannot go. You have a Christian conscience because you have been brought up as a Christian. I have a pawnbroking conscience because I have been brought up as a pawnbroker. There are different denominations and different consciences belonging to them. What is right to one is wrong to another. All that I know of right and wrong Lazarus has taught me, or it has grown up unsown, like the grass and weeds in my back yard, that shoot between the stones. It stands written in fire on my heart that I cannot go without the duplicate, and that if Lazarus chooses to make me his wife, I cannot help myself. If I go against that writing, all light will go out black before my eyes, and I shall be blind.’

‘O Joe! Joe! it must not be!’ Charles spoke in pain.

‘How can I escape?’

‘The thought is too terrible; that hateful, loathsome Jew—and you—you!’ He caught her arm, and drew it through his and paced the pier. ‘It maddens me; I must work off my fever. You do not mean it. You say it out of frolic to torture me, and when you have driven me to desperation, you will burst forth into one of your fresh laughs. Is it not so?’

‘No, it is true.’

‘But you cannot like him.’

‘I respect him as a master. I hate him as a lover.’

‘Joe, it must not be. Run away. Go into service; if you want money, I will give you all I have; sell the very clothes off my back to support you. Trust me, try me, I will work the flesh off my fingers to save you from so hateful a fate. I am in earnest; you will not believe me. You have known me only as an idler and a good-for-naught. I have had no one to care for, nothing to work for. Promise me, promise me you will not—’ His voice gave way. He could not finish his sentence.

‘My friend,’ she said quietly, ‘I cannot run away. I have told you so already. It would be wrong according to my pawnbroking conscience. I cannot receive your money, that would be wrong according to my womanly conscience. I cannot remain with Lazarus, except as his wife, now that he has asked me to be that. That also, according to my womanly conscience, would be wrong. If he had not asked me, I could have remained, and I would have remained, as hitherto, working, starving, bargaining, begging, lying for him. As that cannot be, there remains a single door of escape.’

‘Then escape by it,’ said Charles.

‘You wish it?’ she asked quietly, looking him full in the face.

‘Certainly, anything rather than—— But what is it?’

She shook her head and drew a long deep sigh.

‘Let me go!’ she said; for he was still holding her wrist.

‘No, tell me.’

She suddenly extricated herself from his grasp.

The white light was spreading in the eastern sky, and the moon, struck with paralysis, failed and became dim.

‘Joe!’ he said, and covered his eyes. ‘Now only, when about to lose you, do I begin to realise what you are to me.’

He looked up, looked around—she was gone.

(To be continued.)



A KENTISH BOSWELL.

MR. HENRY WILLIAM BROOKE was the last male representative of a now totally extinct good old county family of Brookes. Officially he was head of the Alien Office; personally the friend of a roll of illustrious heroes and statesmen—the guardians of England during the long Napoleonic wars. From his and their letters we gather that he was the trusted friend and frequent guest of the younger Pitt, Wellington, George Canning, and a host only less known to fame, not to mention the exiled French princes afterwards to be known as Louis XVIII., Charles X., and Louis Philippe. Alike from his letters and journals, intended only for the private eye, we discover that he was what is called a gentleman of the old school; and his portrait, decorated with that ‘Order of the Lily’ which Louis XVIII. sent him when restored to the throne of his ancestors, confirms the impression, with its clear-cut, aristocratic features and air of repose.

But he was something more than a courtly old gentleman, for he has left behind him, hitherto unpublished, a few brief journals written with that observation of interesting detail and that unconsciousness of ridicule accruing to himself which has made James Boswell the prince of photographic biographers.

They chiefly relate to the exiled French princes, and his respect for royalty, as evidenced by the manner in which he speaks of them; and the ‘capitals’ he lavishes when he brings himself to employ personal pronouns instead of their full titles, recalls the famous ‘chronique’ of that valiant mediæval soldier Villeneuve, who could hardly chronicle his royal master’s coming down to breakfast without referring to him as that most august and Christian prince, the never-to-be-forgotten, &c., &c., King of France, of Naples, and of Jerusalem.

Until his family became extinct these journals, of course, were not for publication; but upon the demise of the last of his children, some years ago, his papers, with his other personal effects, descended to his godson and representative, my father, Mr. Douglas Brooke Sladen, who has placed their publication at my disposal.

I need do no more in the way of preface than point out that the interest of Mr. Brooke's journals lies in the fact that they are the private diaries of the head of that department of the State which had the regulation of our relations with aliens during the long European wars of the beginning of the century, when the convulsions of the Continent filled Great Britain with the fallen great of many nations.

What specially concerns us about Mr. Brooke in this article is that in November 1807 he was selected by Canning, then Foreign Secretary, to go down to meet the prince who afterwards sat on the throne of France as Louis XVIII., when, owing to his desertion by the Emperor Paul of Russia, that unhappy descendant of many monarchs was compelled to seek a refuge in the last sanctuary that was open to him—Great Britain. Mr. Brooke was sent down to meet him first at Sheerness, where he did not land, and afterwards at Yarmouth, where he disembarked. The narrative of what happened is in Mr. Brooke's own handwriting and signed by him, and with it are preserved many letters from the exiled Bourbon princes whom it was his privilege to oblige, including a memorandum in the autograph of King Louis Philippe of the horses &c. to be engaged for the journey, a copy of which will be introduced in its proper place. But before beginning the narrative, which I shall print verbatim, to show readers where exactly they are upon the broad sea of history, I will epitomise a couple of pages from Alison (vol. xii. p. 511).

Louis XVIII., as Comte de Lille, lived in retirement at Verona till the approach of Napoleon's victorious arms in 1796 forced him to quit. He afterwards went to Blankenburg, whence various unsuccessful attempts were made to induce Buonaparte to play the part of General Monk. The implication of the royalists in the conspiracy of the Club of Clichy in 1797 rendered it necessary for Louis XVIII. to withdraw to Mittau in Livonia, where he had a pension of 25,000*l.* a year from the Emperor Paul; and here he was afterwards joined by the Duke and Duchess d'Angoulême. The sudden conversion of Paul to the alliance of the First Consul caused the august exiles to quit Russian territory, and they took refuge in Prussia, but only as private individuals, while England allowed the Comte d'Artois to reside at Holyrood. Thence he passed into Sweden, where he issued his protests against the assumption of the imperial dignity by Napoleon. When war broke out between France and Russia in 1805, he returned to

Mittau, but the peace of Tilsit rendering that refuge insecure he resolved to seek refuge in Britain, and with all his family, except d'Artois, who was at Edinburgh already, embarked on the Swedish frigate *Freya*, which reached Yarmouth safely (1807).

Their arrival embarrassed the British Cabinet. If they received Louis as king it meant war to the knife with the new emperor, and made the contest an attempt to reinstate the Bourbons, which might influence the unanimity with which it was prosecuted by the nation, and therefore affect its ultimate issue. The Opposition would gladly have availed themselves of a pretext for representing the contest not as one of defence and necessity, but one of aggression to force upon the French a dynasty which they disliked. Therefore the majority of the Cabinet, after an anxious deliberation of three days, followed Canning, who resisted the recognition of Louis as king. Louis was informed by a Cabinet minute 'that he should receive a secure and honourable asylum in Great Britain, but that he must not expect an express acknowledgment of his title to the throne.' He resided in England till Napoleon's fall as a private but illustrious individual at Gosfield Hall, a seat of the Duke of Buckingham, where he was joined by the Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême, and then at Hartwell, another seat of the Buckingham family, where he remained until the Restoration.

MR. BROOKE'S NARRATIVE.

1807.

Narrative of my journey to Yarmouth in November 1807, where I was despatched by His Majesty's Government (in the reign of H.M. George 3rd) to attend the Count de L'Isle (Louis the 18th, King of France) on H.M.'s arrival in England on board the Swedish frigate Freya, Capt. —.

H. W. BROOKE.

The arrival of H. M. Louis the 18th on board the Swedish frigate *Freya* of 44 guns in Yarmouth Roads (having been previously expected at Sheerness), was announced to the British Government on the — November, 1807, in a letter from the Collector of Customs at Yarmouth. In conformity to the instructions given to that officer by the Secretary of State, no persons were to be

permitted to land from on board the Freya frigate until further orders. Government having decided that H.M. Louis 18th should only be permitted to land and be received as the Count de L'Isle, I was directed by Lord Hawkesbury, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to wait upon His Royal Highness Monsieur (afterwards Charles the Xth) to ascertain whether, in the event of any person being sent down to Yarmouth by the Government, it would be agreeable to His Royal Highness that I should be selected for that mission. On explaining to His Royal Highness the object of my visit, he very graciously charged me to thank Lord Hawkesbury in his name for this mark of his Lordship's attention, and was pleased to add that my nomination would be extremely satisfactory to himself, and that he might venture to add in the King's name that it would be equally so to His Majesty, as I had always shown myself much interested in what concerned them. On my return to the Foreign Department in Downing Street, it was decided by Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Canning, the Foreign Secretary of State, that I should immediately repair to Yarmouth with an order to the Collector of the Customs for the landing of the Count de L'Isle and his suite.

It was Lord Hawkesbury's desire that his majesty should receive every facility and civility from the Mayor of Yarmouth, the Port Admiral (Billy Douglass¹), and others, but his Lordship added that it was to be recollected 'that Louis the 18th came as Count de L'Isle and not as King of France.' I was also to accompany H.M. to Gosfield Hall, near Halstead, in Essex, the seat of the Marquis of Buckingham. Lord Hawkesbury then gave me a letter to H.R.H. *Monsieur*, which I was to deliver to him on the road or at Yarmouth. I overtook *Monsieur* at Ingateston, where H.R.H. had stopped to change horses on his road to Yarmouth. His Royal Highness was accompanied by H.S.H. the Duke de Bourbon, son of the Prince de Condé, and father of the unfortunate Duke D'Enghien, and the Count de Pussygen. This latter nobleman was the Captain of H.R.H.'s Guard in Waiting. H.R.H. was kind enough to say that he hoped it would not fatigue me, as he intended to continue the journey all night, and settled that (as he was in his own carriage—a Landau, heavily laden) if I arrived at Yarmouth first, I should join him there. H.R.H. started

¹ A personal friend of Mr. Brooke, whose family, like Mr. B., resided at Walmer, near Deal, on the coast of Kent, for many years.

before me, but as my carriage was lightest and he stopped some time to breakfast at Yoxford, I reached Yarmouth before him (on Sunday the — Nov^r. 1807, about $\frac{1}{2}$ p. 12 m.) Here I met His R. Highness the Duke of Orleans, for whom H.R. (*sic*) *Monsieur* (since Louis Philippe, King of the French), who had come from his residence at Twickenham to pay his devoirs to the King, had given me a letter. H.R.H. received me with great affability, and expressed a wish to be permitted to accompany me on board the Swedish frigate. I then waited on Mr. Palgrave, the Collector of the Customs, the Port Admiral (Billy Douglass), and Mr. Lacon, the Mayor, and explained to them in what character the Count de L'Isle was to land. I experienced from them much civility and attention. The Admiral ordered his barge, steered by Captain Curry, the Captain of the flagship, to attend to H.R.H. *Monsieur*, the Duke de Bourbon, and Count de Pussygen (who arrived in the meantime), H.S.H. (*sic*) the Duke of Orleans, and myself on board the Swedish frigate Freya, which lay about three miles and a half from the shore. We embarked at the jetty between 4 and 5 P.M. The sea running high, the Admiral's barge could not approach the shore, and we were therefore obliged to get into a small boat to reach the Admiral's Barge. Previous to our embarking the Princes had expressed much anxiety about lodging the King on his landing. They did not like the idea of His Majesty being obliged to go to an inn, and, indeed, owing to the number of officers who had just landed at Yarmouth from the expedition returned from Copenhagen, neither accommodation at the inns nor private lodgings could be procured. Admiral Douglass, the Port Admiral, and his family, consisting of his lady and two daughters, were lodged at an ironmonger's shop, so that he could not offer the King any accommodation. The Mayor of Yarmouth (to whom I could only hint in delicate terms that his house would be acceptable) excused himself on the plea of its being too small, but suggested that Admiral Russell (who was Commander-in-Chief on the Yarmouth station and then on board his ship in the Roads) had a lodging on shore which would answer the purpose. I therefore wrote a private letter to Admiral Russell and requested him to send his answer to me on board the Freya frigate. I had formerly a slight personal acquaintance with Admiral Russell, but sufficient to convince me of his kind feeling and good-nature. We arrived alongside the frigate between 5 and 6 P.M.

Captain Curry first ascended the frigate's side, and announced my arrival from Government. The King, accompanied by the Dukes D'Angouleme and Berry (the son of *Monsieur*) and the officers and noblemen of His M.'s suite, immediately made their appearance (bare-headed) on the deck, accompanied by all the officers of the Swedish frigate. The King, approaching the side of the vessel, called out, 'Capet.' *Monsieur* answered, 'Me voici.' The party in the Admiral's Barge then went on board of her. The meeting of the royal relatives was marked by feelings of the most affectionate attachment. After the first salutations were over, His Royal Highness *Monsieur* did me the honour to introduce me to the King in the most condescending manner, saying, 'Mon frère, permettez-moi de vous presenter Monsieur Brooke, envoyé de la part de Lord Hawkesbury pour votre débarquement (adding ironically), c'est un tres mauvais sujet, qui a toujours été tres malhonnête pour nous!' The party then retired to the cabin where the noblemen and gentlemen of the King's suite were introduced to *Monsieur* and the Princes, as also the captain and officers of the Swedish frigate. Shortly afterwards Admiral Russell's arrival on board was announced, and I introduced him to His Majesty and the Princes. He evinced much emotion on being presented to the King, even to tears. I explained at the Admiral's request (evidently to the disappointment of the King and those who were with him) that the Admiral's lodgings on shore were far too small for H.M.'s accommodation. His Majesty and H.R.H. *Monsieur* retired for a short time into his private cabin. It was there decided (that) the King should not go on shore until the following morning. It was afterwards discussed where the King should breakfast, and the want of accommodation at the inns was explained to him. His Majesty evidently felt uncomfortable, and said, turning to his royal brother *Monsieur*, 'Je ne suis pas trop gâté' (*sic*). I perceived also that H.R.H. *Monsieur* was evidently chagrined, as he observed to me in half a whisper, 'Could not the Mayor?' I felt extremely distressed and embarrassed by this hint, that the Mayor was expected to show, or at least looked to, for this mark of attention, especially knowing, as I did, that I possessed no official means of requiring it. Indeed, the Government could not have exacted of the Mayor to entertain His Majesty, unless they had intimated their desire to me that it should be done at the public expense. I was mortified at this want of good feeling and taste on the part of the

Mayor, with whom I had no personal acquaintance, and had already tried the ground with him, which I could not out of delicacy say. I could only pass over His Royal Highness's appeal in respectful silence. On quitting the frigate, however, I communicated to Capt. Curry the embarrassment I had felt, and requested he would hint it to Admiral Douglass. On our return to shore in the same order (*sic*) we went, H.R.H. Monsieur condescendingly desired I would sup with them. On coming to table H.R.H. Monsieur told me that Capt. Curry had been there to say (that) Admiral Douglass wished to see me before I went to bed.

During supper we were joined by H.R.H. the venerable Prince of Condé. The conversation turned generally upon the King's personal requirements. H.R.H. *Monsieur* observed that H. Majesty was intimately acquainted with European languages, and had a wonderfully retentive memory. His R.H. gave a strong instance of it in relation of the following anecdote. When the King and himself were boys, H. Majesty being about ten years of age, their father took up the Court Kalendar and gave them two pages to learn. The subject was the names of the lawyers and the places of their residences. This the King effected in ten minutes.

When supper was over I went to the Admiral's lodgings. He told me he had sent to consult me about the King's breakfasting with him. That, from what I saw of the accommodation of his lodgings, and owing to the shortness of the notice (as the King was to come on shore in the morning), he felt embarrassed about offering H.M. a breakfast. As I had perceived that the feelings of the Princes were more interested about the mode of the King's reception on shore than about the splendor or excellence of the meal, I took the liberty of suggesting my ideas to the Admiral, and being joined by his amiable wife and daughters, he very cheerfully waived his own difficulties in favour of our suggestions. Mrs. Douglass observed that the Admiral's inclination was good, but that he always wished when he did anything of the kind to do it well. It was at length settled that I should return to the Princes, and in the Admiral's name invite the whole party to breakfast the next morning at nine o'clock. This arrangement, I was gratified to perceive, was evidently very satisfactory to H.R.H. *Monsieur* and the other Princes. It had been arranged prior to our quitting the frigate over night that Admiral Russell should

bring the King and his suite on shore in his barge in the morning, and that His Majesty should be landed at the Drawbridge in the Harbour between nine and ten a.m. on the —.

The King was landed amidst the huzzas of the populace. No guns were fired, either from the Swedish frigate or from the shore. His Royal Highness *Monsieur* had sent his carriage to the pier to convey the King to Admiral Douglass's lodgings, and the Admiral paid a similar attention by sending his. On the King's arrival before the door of Admiral Douglass's lodgings, I assisted His Majesty in alighting from His carriage—Admiral Douglass and myself uncovered—then conducted His Majesty and the Princes thro' a large concourse of people, who had ranged themselves in ranks and on each side of the carriage into the house. I was then requested (as speaking French) to introduce the party present to receive them to the King and Princes, among whom was Sir Samuel Hood. The ceremony over, we sat down to a very handsome and well-arranged collation, particularly as there had been so little time to prepare it; indeed, I understood that Mrs. Douglass and her amiable daughters had devoted the greater part of the previous night to the employment, and some of her neighbours had contributed to the luxuries exhibited. All the illustrious guests seemed pleased with the attention shewn them. Breakfast ended, we commenced preparations to proceed to our journey to Gosfield Hall, a seat of the Marquiss (*sic*) of Buckingham at that time unoccupied. His Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans¹ had previously arranged with me the order in which we were to travel. I have the particulars in H.S.H.'s (*sic*) handwriting.

[The following, with its mixture of French and English, is a literatim copy.]

Le Roi	four coach horses	4
	saddle	1
	for servants' postchaise	4
Monsieur	coach	4
	saddle	1
	servants	2
Mr. Le D. d'Angoulême		4
Mr. Le D. de Berri		4
Mr. Le D. d'Orleans		4
Mr. Le P. de Condé		4
	32 horses	
Mr. Brooke	4 do.	
	36 do.	

¹ This H.R.H. the Duke of Orleans was afterwards Louis Philippe, King of France.—Ed.

The King's	.	.	.	.	.	1 coach.
Monsieur	.	.	.	.	.	1 do. and 1 charriot.
Me.	.	.	.	.	.	1 charriot.
M. Le Prince	.	.	.	.	.	1 charriot.

At — o'clock I took my departure from Yarmouth in H.R.H. *Monsieur's* chariot, accompanied by the Count de Pussygen, H.R.H.'s equerry in attendance. We halted at Yoxford, where we were joined by the Royal party, and dinner was prepared, which His Majesty generously desired I would partake with them. Before dinner had ended I was called out of the room to the Honourable Charles Bagot and Mr. Ross. The former was at that time Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the latter Private Secretary to Mr. Canning, by whom they had been sent to compliment His Majesty Lewis 18 (*sic*) on his safe arrival in England under the title of Count de L'Isle. Shortly after I had introduced them, they took their leave and returned to London.

The next morning I proceeded with the Count de Pussygen on our route to Gosfield Hall. On stopping to change horses at Colchester, the landlord of the Cup inn took me on one side and told me he had a great favour to ask of me. It was that as he had just completed (*sic*) a new Ball-room, into which he was very desirous the King would condescend to enter when he stopped to change horses on his way to Gosfield Hall, that I would pave the way for the accomplishment of his wish. I mentioned this to the Count de Pussygen, who very good-naturedly left a note to be given to H.R.H. *Monsieur* on his arrival there with the King and the other Princes, submitting the landlord's request. We then pursued our journey. On reaching Gosfield Hall, owing to the uncertainty of the King's arrival, we found the old housekeeper had not been apprised of it in time to make a suitable preparation for H.M.'s reception. This distressed her exceedingly. She, however, set to work to air beds, light fires, and prepare supper. By the time these arrangements were in forwardness, His Majesty and the Princes arrived. I then took the opportunity of observing to the King that the object of my official mission to attend him was at an end, and that I had only to take any further commands that His Majesty might be pleased to honour me with. His gracious reply was, 'I have only to thank you for your attention; and the only commands I have to lay upon you are that you stay and sup with me and sleep here, and leave this place at your convenience.' This kindness it will

be supposed I thankfully availed myself of. I must not now omit to note some anecdotes highly indicative of His Majesty's kindness of heart and disposition, altho' in so doing I expose my own failure in a certain etiquette with which I was not unfortunately cognisant. His Royal Highness *Monsieur*, whose condescending and elegant manners were well known in every court of Europe, observing on our route (at Yoxford), that I took a great deal of snuff, and that my box was empty, had very graciously tendered me his own snuff-box from time to time. The conversation, therefore, at supper-time having been freed from restraint, I took the liberty of soliciting H.R.H. to allow me to take a pinch of snuff, which he, with the greatest good-nature offered me. I had no sooner done this than I perceived by the countenance of my next neighbour at table, the Count de —, that I had been guilty of an indiscretion of some kind, though it did not immediately occur to me what it could be. However, when we rose from table, I determined to solve my dilemma, and turning to my friend the Count, I told him I was sure by his manner that I had failed in etiquette in some way, and that I expected of his friendship he would frankly tell me in what my error consisted. He hesitated and made light of it, but upon my insisting on knowing, he said he observed I had requested H.R. (*sic*) *Monsieur* for a pinch of snuff, a request it was unusual to make among them of a Prince of the Blood. It will easily be conceived that in spite of the Count's well-bred attempts to make me satisfied with myself, that this little blunder made me feel uncomfortable, but I consoled myself with the reflection that I had been led into error by H.R.'s (*sic*) spontaneous offer of his snuff-box on the road. By-and-bye for the sequel of this. The party then retired to the drawing-room to take coffee, when His Majesty very graciously entered into conversation with me. His Majesty addressing me aloud said, 'Oh, Mr. Brooke, a circumstance happened to me on the road, while changing horses, which at the moment affected me a good deal. I had occasion to retire, and on my returning towards the inn door, I was met by a gentleman who accosted me by asking if I was not the King of France. To this I nodded assent, upon which he took a snuff-box out of his pocket with a miniature on the lid of it, observing, "So I thought, for that is a portrait of your brother Louis 16th," and he thought I was very like him!' It may easily be conceived that I felt as if a feather would have knocked me down, as one object of my mission was to

prevent His Majesty from experiencing any annoyance on his route, such being the state of the public mind at that period that it was apprehended feeling might be manifested in favour of Bonaparte, &c., and averse (*sic*) to the Bourbons; but His Majesty readily perceiving my distress, very good-naturedly added, 'But I am sure he was very loyal, for he told me he had been in India, and had got some very fine Madeira wine, and that if I would accept some he would give me a few bottles. So he went and fetched them, and I had them put into the carriage, and have brought them down with me.' His Majesty followed up this anecdote by another, still further to dissipate my discomposure. 'Oh,' he said, 'I have something to tell you, Mr. Brooke, which will make you laugh. When I arrived at Colchester I learned the landlord of the inn was very desirous I should enter a new room he had just finished, and to this I consented, when to my astonishment I found about 150 persons ranged on each side, among whom were a great many ladies, and a cold collation was prepared for me to partake of. In the room I found the young Duke de Guiche, the son of the Duke de Gramont, who being quartered with his regiment, the — Light Dragoons, had come to meet his father. They were so delighted to see each other, that, according to our French custom, they proceeded to embrace. Now, as I knew this was not an English fashion, and the English ladies were looking at them, I tried to place myself between them, but the more I tried the more they persevered, to my great amusement.'

As it now began to get late and I intended to leave Gosfield Hall in the morning, I approached the King to take leave, who very graciously extended his hand to me and repeated his satisfaction with the manner in which I had executed my mission. I then withdrew to my chamber. As soon as I found myself alone in the Hall, overcome by His Majesty's condescension and benevolence of manner, and the reflection that I had just closed the door of an apartment (*sic*) which contained the collected Princes of a hitherto scattered dynasty, the prey of fickle fortune, whose throne was occupied by an alien, who had waded to it through tyranny, bloodshed, revolution, and horror, when I reflected that my own most gracious and excellent King and Master (Geo. 3rd), had not and might not escape the shafts of his unprincipled enemies, I shed tears which I am not ashamed to avow. And why should I, since I find my justification in one of those bursts

of eloquence which adorn the sublime pages of an Edmund Burke, in his treatise on the French Revolution, and who says: 'It is natural because we are so made as to be affected at such spectacles with melancholy sentiments on the unstable condition of mortal prosperity and on the tremendous uncertainty of human greatness, because in these natural feelings we learn great lessons, because in events like these our passions instruct our reason, because when kings are hurled from their thrones by the supreme director of this great drama, and become the objects of insult to the base and pity to the good, we behold such disasters in the moral as we should behold a miracle in the physical order of things, we are alarmed into reflection, our minds are purified by terror and pity, our weak unthinking pride is humbled under the dispensations of a mysterious wisdom.'

I had no sooner reached my chamber and lain (*sic*) myself down in bed, than I heard a gentle tap at my door, and on the door being opened two of the King's valets presented themselves with silver cannisters (*sic*), and said that His Majesty having observed that my snuff-box was exhausted (*sic*), he had directed them to fill it. In fact, I have no doubt the Count —, having hinted to the circle (when I left the drawing-room), the distress I had felt at my little inadvertence before detailed, His Majesty had hit upon this expedient to prove that it had made no ill impression in his own or R.H. (*sic*) *Monsieur's* mind or feelings. This, if there were need, would speak volumes, but the personal affability of these princes cannot, I conceive, have ever been brought into question by their bitterest political enemies.

Prior to the King's arrival having been announced from Yarmouth, I had been despatched by Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Secretary Canning (24th Oct., 1807), to Sheerness in expectation of His Majesty's arrival there, with a letter of introduction to Admiral Louis, &c.

My mission in the event of the Count de L'Isle's arrival at Sheerness, would have proved a very painful and embarrassing one, as the confidential instructions I had received were peremptory to ensure a compliance with the King (George 3rd's) decision that the Count de L'Isle should take up his residence in the Palace of Holyrood, Edinburgh. On the 21st December, 1807, I had the satisfaction to receive a letter from my worthy friend the Baron de N—— (Nantrat), containing the following passage, which was the more gratifying to me as I knew him from experience to be

devoted to the interests of the King and Princes, as well as my excellent and ever-to-be-lamented friend, the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon, who resided in London during the French Revolution.

‘J’ai oublié de vous dire que notre malheureux Roi fait votre éloge toutes les fois qu’il a occasion de parler de son débarquement à Yarmouth ; il dit toujours le *bon M. Brooke*. J’étois (*sic*) bien sur d’avance que vous auriez pour lui tous les égards, que soient en votre pouvoir.’

H. W. Brooke’s translation of the above :—‘I forgot to tell you that our unfortunate King sings your praises every time he has occasion to speak of his disembarkation (*sic*) at Yarmouth ; he always says the *good Mr. Brooke* ! I was convinced beforehand that you would show him all the attention in your power.’

It will readily be conceived, feeling deeply, as I at all times did, the unhappy position of the exiled King and Princes, and the inadequate means with which I was furnished to ensure them all the comfort my *personal* inclinations would have afforded them, that I was gratified at perceiving that, at least, those Princes were satisfied with my personal endeavours.

His Majesty was also pleased to send the Duke de la Chasties (His Minister), afterwards (at the Restoration), H.M.’s accredited Ambassador at the British Court, to Lord Hawkesbury to express his satisfaction with the manner in which I had executed the mission entrusted to me.



SUSPENSE.

HEART SICKNESS, that of old the wise man knew,
Despite his wisdom, creepeth like a pall
Over the opulent springtime, quenching all
The sunshine, and the verdure, and the blue
Into one grey monotony of hue.

I hear from budding boughs the thrushes call,
From beaded spray the tinted blossoms fall
Upon the long lush grasses wet with dew ;
And all this harmony of light and song,—

These swift cloud-shadows, purpling hill and wold,
These emerald spaces betwixt leaves of gold,—
Strikes on my dull brain with a sense of wrong.

Spring to a sad heart, suddenly grown cold,
Seems a vain story, tedious told and long !

SWORN TO THE FETISH.



LIFE in Negroland is full of comicality. It is not too much to say that every passion and feeling of the 'bush black' becomes grotesque in its development. Once on a time I chanced to see the meeting of a mother and child, both slaves, who had not heard of one another for six years. The latter was going up country in my train, the former descending with a caravan. Their recognition was the most extravagant farce, the most touching scene of pathos, I ever beheld. They hugged, they danced,

blubbered, roared, screamed, snapped their fingers and slapped each other, with such pitiful ridiculous contortions as made us choke with sympathy and laughter. A black man in homicidal rage is monstrously funny to disinterested observers, and a black man frightened is quite the drollest spectacle the world affords.

But those acquainted with the bush negro do not need a hint that this burlesque exterior may hide a resolution fixed and remorseless, an insight singularly shrewd, within its narrow bounds; devoted affection and unbending hate. The most childish of these feather-headed people can keep a secret. For a parallel to the strange conspiracies not unfrequent in Africa, one must search Ireland alone.

The seeming contradictions of negro character are most strongly marked in the influence of the fetish. It is all grotesque on the outside, and when a European new to the coast ridicules the absurdities of the superstition, all his 'boys' laugh frankly and heartily. But after a certain experience he comes

to suspect that Fetishism cannot be regarded as all fun and folly, shreds, rags, and grotesque observances, even when controlled by English law. If he be shrewd and not too scrupulous, he learns to use the machinery as he finds it, asking no questions. It is difficult to gather from the traders what they know or what they think upon the subject. Very few have looked into it closely, I believe, and what they have learned does not encourage gossip. In European stations of the coast, Fetishism is a hidden but superior jurisdiction. The whole native population obey it, and too often they compel their rulers to perform the black work of the confederacy. A judge dimly perceives its evil hand in cases brought before his court, but very seldom can he trace its working. This is a painful subject, upon which I should be loth to dwell; for the troubles of a conscientious magistrate in Negroland are heavy enough without criticism from those who cannot follow the thread in the woof of his perplexities.

I have always felt a special interest in this mystery, as must any man of imagination who has glanced at it. But so little is known, and witnesses are so reluctant, that one comes to a full stop very near the outset of inquiry. In the West Indies, whilst slavery ruled, the fetish, or Obi man—sometimes woman—was hunted down, not unfrequently through revelations obtained by torture. The crime alleged against him was always poisoning, with witchcraft commonly added; but I have found no case when the latter charge was fairly examined. The system probably was never organised there as at home. In Africa, each large district has its central station, or 'Hole,' as it is significantly called. There dwell a number of priests, men and women. What form or decree of judicial influence circulates from the Hole, there is, so far as I can learn, actually no evidence. Those who employ the organisation where white people feel it, as, for instance, at Sierra Leone, Cape Coast Castle, or Elmina, are the hereditary chiefs, men who speak English perhaps, and discuss the policy of Mr. Gladstone when the padre visits them. One may suppose that their doings are quite uncontrolled by those powers who simply furnish the poisons, or charms, or medicines demanded. I have a fancy that these priests of the Hole are not altogether charlatans. The subordinate men, who dwell with the people in their villages, perform strange feats sometimes, quite beyond their usual capacity. The knowledge and the means may perhaps be transmitted to them. But really we know nothing

about it, and the following story, the best of many I have collected, throws, I am sorry to say, no light on the main question.

In the great days of African trade—early in this century, that is—a leading firm had a station at Egkasi, on the Munda. It was occupied by a native clerk named Fraser, who for several years transacted the business with results highly satisfactory to Messrs. Reid, Yardly, and Sons. But the profits fell off, and the explanations offered did not convince Mr. Fraser's employers. The state of things at Egkasi had a large share in persuading the junior partner to visit the coast himself. He was a young man just married. I do not quite understand, though some suggestions might be offered in passing, why the coast was not nearly so terrible to our grandfathers as to our own generation. Mrs. Yardly insisted on accompanying her husband. They travelled comfortably aboard the vessels of the firm, and found luxurious living in the 'hulks' which West African trade could well support at that time. The young merchant discovered many mysteries of local commerce to unravel as he coasted slowly down. His wife bore a daughter in a hulk on the Calabar. As soon as she could be moved Yardly went on with her to Egkasi, the southernmost of his stations; and from thence news came, after a long while, that he, his wife and baby, with Fraser, had been murdered.

England had no squadron on the coast at that day. Messrs. Reid and Yardly could but wait confirmation, which arrived by the next of their ships, which should have taken in cargo at Egkasi. Theirs was the only trading post there. The captain found nobody to answer questions, but evidence of the main facts was conspicuous enough in the charred timbers of the store and the disappearance of the hulk. We threw some fire-balls into the town, set it burning, and withdrew. Opinion on the coast was severe against Messrs. Reid and Yardly for not taking more vigorous steps. Scandal readily found a motive for their inactivity. Mr. Yardly, senior, had retired an invalid; Mr. Yardly, junior, was not liked. The Reids were glad to be rid of their partners.

Egkasi was deserted for fourteen years. Then the firm decided to reopen the branch, which they set under charge of an active young man named Lomas. He gladly accepted a post of danger where the risk was handsomely compensated. A few days before sailing, Lomas received a note from Mr. Yardly, asking him to call. Very old and feeble now was the father of the murdered

man. He declared with feverish confidence that his grandchild was alive. To her all his fortune was left, and he promised 20,000*l.* for her recovery. Lomas promptly begged that this condition should be stated in due legal form, which was presently executed. Then he demanded the evidence of the child's survival. But Mr. Yardly had none to give beyond an enthusiastic conviction and certain dreams. Lomas was not a man to overlook any chance, but the 20,000*l.* seemed very remote.

At Egkasi he was welcomed with extravagant delight. The chiefs had not tasted rum for many years, or dared to waste a charge of powder at the grandest festivals. Lomas needed no assurance that these men would protect him with their utmost power. The consequences of one act of madness had been too painful. Moreover, they declared unanimously that the perpetrators of the massacre were strangers who came down the river by night, surprised the hulk, plundered the store, and returned, killing several townspeople who ran to give assistance when awakened by the flames. They had not carried this explanation to the ship when it arrived because the captain began firing at once. Lomas accepted their statements, subject to further inquiry. He refrained from asking specially about the child. The chiefs declared that they saw no bodies, which had doubtless been consumed in the hulk. Lomas had brought a new one, in which he lived with an English clerk, who has no part in this story, three mulatto writers, and certain servants. All had been drafted from other stations of the firm, and their trustworthiness was unquestionable. He found it impossible to get an interpreter upon the coast. One of the writers possessed a mere smattering of the language, and he studied hard to improve. This young fellow's name was Williams, a half-caste of Mandingo stock on the female side. Missionary training had not obliterated all his recollections of savage life, nor tamed the shrewd courage derived from either parent. Lomas recognised a spirit very like his own, allied with a better temper and better manners.

One day an old black man, who gave the name of Moses, presented himself on board. He spoke English perfectly, and Lomas was delighted to engage him as interpreter, though the story he told was not above criticism. Moses had been employed by Fraser—the agent who was killed with Mr. Yardly—upon business of importance, as old letters in his possession showed. Fortunately for him, he was away up coast when the massacre

occurred. Since returning to Egkasi he had established a very small barter business, which scarcely kept him alive. Lomas did not inquire very closely, since the old fellow could do no worse harm than cheat. He threw no light whatever on the murders. In a general way his reticence confirmed Lomas in suspecting that those friendly chiefs of Egkasi were the criminals after all, an idea which Williams had entertained from the first.

The new station did not prove successful. Trade had sought other channels during that long interregnum, for here, as elsewhere in Africa, the profitable business is all done with inland peoples. After a year's experiment, when the vague hope of that 20,000% had quite faded, Lomas first hinted, then demonstrated, that it would be wiser to follow trade than to persevere in wooing it to return. The firm trusted his judgment, and accepted in principle the idea of transferring their Egkasi station. Lomas tried his utmost to prevent the spread of this news, which would certainly rouse a dangerous agitation, but he failed. The chiefs heard it, and they came in a body to inquire. They offered Lomas a heavy bribe to remain, and he hesitated. That afternoon Moses earnestly begged permission to sleep aboard the hulk in future. He said the people had a notion that his influence was hostile to them. Lomas peremptorily refused. At a moment of possible danger he would not have a person of rather suspicious antecedents in the hulk at night.

Two days afterwards the chiefs returned, equipped in their best robes, for a solemn palaver. From his desk in the counting-house Moses could see their canoes approaching. He stared at them through the port, his face grey and working; then threw himself upon his knees before Lomas. 'I confess it all, sir! You shall know everything! Don't, oh, sir, don't give up an old man to those devils!'

'Confess what?' asked Lomas, amazed.

'I did it! I killed Mr. Yardly, and I burnt the hulk—but not the store! This wound I got, defending the property of the firm!'

'You cursed scoundrel——'

'But don't give me up, sir! Don't listen to them! Send me up the coast, or keep me safe, and I'll tell what no man knows!'

Williams came in to announce the chiefs, and he stood staring. 'Take this man into your room, and keep guard over him!' Then Lomas went on deck.

What the chiefs had to say was that the fetish was angry with them for keeping a secret from their kind 'trader.' They all swore by their great oath that no one had hand in the crime except Fraser, who was Moses, and his servants, upon whom they were eager to do justice.

Lomas dismissed them and returned to his interpreter. The interest of my tale does not lie in the details of the old crime. Moses admitted all, with such excuses as he had framed in years



of alarm and disappointment. Yardly suspected him unjustly. Both had a violent temper and both drank to excess. So, one evening, without premeditation, Fraser shot down his guest.

'But the lady and the child?' asked Lomas, with stern passion.

'I did not touch them! Those bad people of the town had collected round the store, and I rowed off at once. They cut me—look! I was almost killed, doing my duty!'

'But you say you burnt the hulk?'

'That was afterwards——'

'When you were almost dead with that wound! The chiefs will get the truth out of you!'

'No—no! I will tell! The negro people killed them and fired the hulk!'

'More lies! Now, as sure as you are living, Fraser, you shall be hanged for this. It depends on yourself whether you are tortured first. I give you till to-morrow to think!'

Lomas found the chiefs still on deck, much agitated. They passionately insisted that Fraser should be given up to them. Their eagerness caused suspicion. Lomas temporised, and after much talk they went away in anger. Very early next day Williams summoned his master. Moses was struck down suddenly. He lay speechless, unable to move, but evidently sensible, and in full use of his hands, snatching at the pencil which hung to Lomas's watch chain. When paper was brought he wrote rapidly, 'The fetish men have poisoned me.'

Said Lomas, 'You have been fed from my galley.'

'I am done for! What I said was partly lies.' Here a convulsion seized the writer. 'Yardly was strong and he had two Kroomen. I vowed his life and his wife's to the fetish. They demanded the child's also. I swore it! Then the hulk's crew agreed, and the chiefs promised to help. We killed them, but the baby I carried ashore. I was hurt defending the firm's property. But she was taken to the Fetish Hole.'

'Who took her?'

'How should I know? I was senseless. That is what they wish to hide from you. They have struck my tongue and my legs, but stupid nigger devils forget that men write. I will tell you. There is——' The fingers travelled fast and freely without advancing. They made a tangle of lines. Lomas tried to help by drawing the paper gently; the dying man let his pencil drop, and looked at the scrawl with terror. His lips moved. Lomas fancied that the sound which did not issue would have been, 'They have found me out!' And then, with white eyes staring and jaw dropped, Fraser fell like one struck by a thunderbolt.

Lomas had not been granted much imagination. He easily got over the direct influence of this strange scene. Fraser had been poisoned doubtless, but it was not necessary to suspect the cook. He ordered that no stranger should be allowed to approach the galley henceforth, and then turned to the 'practical question,'

as he phrased it. That was the 20,000*l.*, with which the release of Miss Yardly was incidentally but inseparably connected.

Before this event he had not found occasion to observe the fetish system in aspects other than ridiculous. The rags and knots were familiar to him; trees with a heap of rubbish, surrounded by a paling at their foot, lay within view. He had long been aware, of course, that the fetish men used poisons, but so does every negro on that coast, if provoked. If this girl were still living, they would trade her away, no doubt, like any other slave, at as big a price as they could get. Lomas did not see any special difficulties in his path. But to open communication with the Fetish Hole Williams's assistance was required. After ordering Fraser's burial, he sent for that youth and told all that was needful for him to know. Williams listened with eager curiosity, but he evidently did not think the matter so simple. 'It's an ugly business,' he said. 'If the young lady is still living, the fetish men will kill her when they learn you know of her existence.'

'Kill her? Why?'

'You don't know nigger customs, sir. Miss Yardly was sworn to the fetish, as I understand. That oath signifies that the person who takes it forfeits his life for the other's destruction. He commits suicide, and the fetish certainly avenges him. The sworn man is carried to the Hole, unless he happily gets killed in assisting, and then he vanishes. Why they allowed Mr. Fraser to live after devoting himself, I cannot tell—probably he bought his life. Now you see.'

'I don't. If Fraser could buy his life, we can buy this girl's. Isn't she now a slave like another?'

'I don't know. But there's a question that comes before all these. Where is the Fetish Hole, and how can you get at the priests?'

'You must help me to do that!' Williams did not answer, but his face was not enthusiastic. 'Look here! If we recover this young lady, her grandfather, who is still alive, will make our fortunes. I tell you what. I'll risk 50*l.* on the chance. Come now!'

'I'm much obliged to you, sir. Do I understand that you pay the sum now?'

'Of course not. But if through your means we restore Miss Yardly to her grandfather, I'll give you 100*l.*' Williams's expression led him to double the sum.

‘Thank you, sir. It will be a long business, anyway.’

It proved to be very long. Month passed after month and brought no information. Lomas reproached his ally with not exerting himself; he answered respectfully, but his manner clearly hinted that the white man knew nothing. Sometimes he ventured to suggest that the reward did not make it worth his while. Then Lomas asked peevishly where the risk lay, and Williams pointed out again that if the priests knew they were seeking Miss Yardly they would kill her instantly, without prejudice to any disagreeable measures they might devise against those who annoyed them. Moreover, he wanted evidence that the girl was living. Lomas saw that the question was one of money. Williams had as much courage as himself, allied to an instinct quite as keen for securing the main chance. But he could not prevail upon himself to offer money out of pocket. And, for the considerations suggested, besides others, the clerk did not think it worth while to act.

A change came suddenly. One evening they both dined aboard the ‘Mary Reid,’ which was to sail next day. Through the open port they heard the sentry’s challenge: ‘Man ahoy! If you come nearer, you blank, I’ll shoot!’ Shoot he did upon his word, and reloaded, swearing at the miss. Such incidents are common, and were commoner then. The party was breaking up. From the head of the companion Williams, who now spoke the language fluently, called to a swimmer unseen. After some conversation, he advised the captain to let the fugitive aboard, and a tall, lithe black, glistening in the red light of the lantern, swung himself upon the gangway grating and ran up. ‘Will you stay awhile, Mr. Lomas?’ Williams said. ‘I think we may get some information.’

He took the negro aft, and they talked long, in excited tones at first, then in whispers. The captain was a good fellow. He consoled himself and Lomas with another glass, and yet another, as they leaned over the bulwarks. At length Williams approached. ‘I have promised this nigger, captain, that you will carry him to Cape Palmas, if not further.’

‘Then you took an unwarrantable liberty aboard my ship, sir! Quartermaster, pitch that black beast over the side!’

‘One moment, please, captain. He has given me valuable information about a matter you know of, Mr. Lomas.’

‘I don’t care if he’s given you a bucketful! Over with him!’

Lomas had been honestly afraid to raise hopes in England which events did not seem likely to justify. But he found it needful to appease the captain. That worthy man found in the broken story reason good for several glasses, and he swore to take care of the fugitive.

'I should have liked to keep the nigger on our hulk,' said Williams, 'but he dared not speak until I assured him of getting away. I'll sleep aboard this ship, sir, if you please, and examine him again.'

'But what has he told you after all?'

'I'll let you know to-morrow. It seems that he had a quarrel with chief Akra's youngest son, who swore his life upon the fetish, the young devil. So this nigger made a run for it.'

On learning all that Williams could tell him next day, Lomas saw some of the difficulties apparent from the first to that shrewd youth. The refugee was a confidential slave of Akra's. In the service of that chief he had several times visited the Fetish Hole—not entering, of course. To reach it one had three days' journey up the river, a day through the bush, and some hours' difficult climbing up a hill. The landmarks were excessively perplexing to follow. Upon the summit of the ridge, under a bare tree, the visitor sat and waited an indeterminate time. A fetish man or a slave arrived at length, from whence nobody knew, gave or took a message, a parcel, or what the business might be, and vanished. Lomas saw that it would be difficult to reach the Fetish Hole, and certainly useless.

But the fugitive had other news that contained a vague suggestion. His deadly quarrel with Akra's son arose from a charge made by that youth against him of dealing with a new and heretic fetish man. Chiefs who support the orthodox priesthood, so to speak, and who are aided by it in constant crimes, regard with terror the appearance of a rival authority. They know better than others what the fetish can do, and they have no confidence that the new may not be stronger than the old. Williams understood this, and he pressed his inquiries. The head of the opposition Mumbo Jumbo lived some miles from the town. He had been a petty chief of influence, of whom Akra grew jealous. The local fetish man accused him of witchcraft, and in the first fury of a superstitious mob his wife was killed. He had but one, and he loved her. Panti, so the chief was named, chanced to be absent, and popular passion had cooled so far before his return that friends

obtained for him the very outside chance of ordeal. The fetish man prepared it scientifically; but the accused survived—a miracle, as none knew so well as the operator. Panti retired to the woods forthwith, and began business on his own account. Soon afterwards the fetish man died, as did his two successors. Popular suspicion fixed on Panti; but the negro is shrewd enough to see that the death of a magician by magic arts implies that the murderer is the more powerful. Much discussion and alarm arose among the chiefs. It was whispered that certain men who disappeared at this time had been sent by Akra and others to kill the new fetish man, but he still lived, and the chiefs in panic left him alone awhile. Pressed hard by Williams, the negro confessed that he had visited Panti, and he exactly described the landmarks that guided visitors to his hut.

Lomas perceived that the magician might be very useful if he would lend his aid. He instructed Williams to find him at once and bring him aboard the hulk. This European idea made the clerk laugh. Lomas then ordered him to go and tell Panti what was wanted. Williams received the injunction silently, made no preparations, and when it was repeated next day refused downright.

‘I’m a Christian clerk, sir,’ he said, ‘and to deal with the devil is not what I engaged for.’

‘You are frightened!’

‘We say, sir, that the man who never saw a musket doesn’t fear it.’

‘Oh, that’s it! Will you go if I accompany you?’

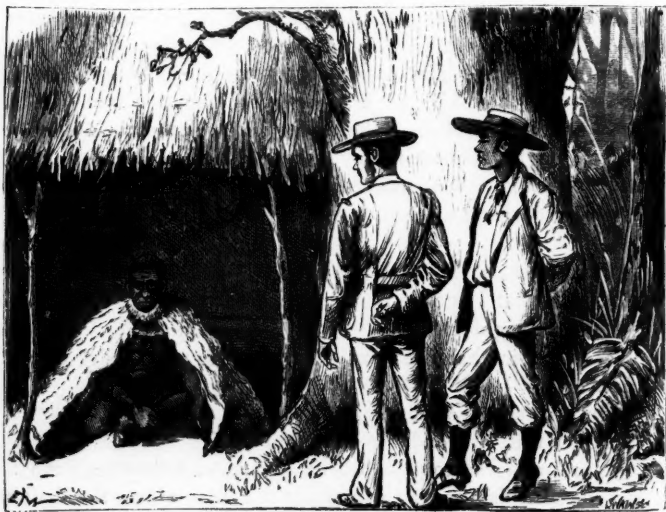
‘Yes, I will, sir; or I’ll go alone for 50*l*.’

Lomas preferred to pay with his person, and they set forth at dawn the next day, towing a small canoe for ascending the shallow creek. The Kroomen returned after disembarking them, and Williams paddled. The fetish hut lay close to the bank, but hidden in bush of the densest thickness. These inexperienced woodsmen missed the landmarks so often that the sun was near its setting when they reached the spot. Williams fortunately had brought food, but his master was tired, irritable, and alarmed by the prospect of spending a night in that malarious forest.

In the middle of a little clearing stood a mighty tree, with buttresses straight and deep as a house-wall. Two of them had been thatched over, forming a room about ten feet square, open to the front. There, in full view, squatted an elderly negro, stark

naked, eating *kanki*. He finished his basin, the nut of some tree, rose, and hung it up. As he did so a sudden boom, as of some enormous gong, disconcerted even Lomas. Without glancing at the intruders, Panti arrayed himself in an old cloak of feathers and fur, with bones and odds and ends attached, then resumed his seat upon the earth. Lomas threw himself down. 'Tell the brute first,' he said, 'that we come on business, and don't want any tomfoolery.'

When Williams had translated this remark in softened phrase, the fetish man answered, 'Tell the white caboceer to get up. He's caught the fever, and it's bad to lie on the ground.'



'Bosh!' exclaimed Lomas, springing up all the same. 'I'm only tired.'

When the purpose of the visit was explained, it evidently interested the fetish man. He and Williams talked eagerly, paying little attention to peevish interruptions. Williams observed that there was no hurry, since they could not return that night. 'And he says I have the fever!' Lomas cried. 'What a fool I was to come!' But he concentrated his mind upon the 20,000*l.*, which seemed a very little nearer, and found patience.

When dusk really settled on the clearing, Williams rose.

'People are coming soon, sir,' he said. 'I am to take you to a place where you will be comfortable.' It lay but a couple of hundred yards behind the tree, marked by reeds and creepers, a hut watertight and clean, but utterly bare of furniture, saving two couches of split bamboo. Lomas threw himself on one of them. He already felt those pains in the head and shoulders which announce the fever.

'I am to give you this, sir,' said Williams, producing a calabash bottle. 'Don't be afraid; I'll stake my life it will do you good.'

After refusing awhile, the pains growing worse, Lomas drank. It may have been the fever or it may have been the remedy that gave him a troubled night. Williams disappeared. Lomas saw the forest burn in flashes; he heard strange sounds, some musical, some awful. The gong sounded continuously, and if each reverberation announced a fresh visitor, the magician must have had a busy night. Towards morning Lomas saw Williams steal away—he had returned unperceived. It was a fading moonlight. His companion rose and followed, or he dreamed he did. In front of the big tree where Pantí had his official residence, six or eight men were standing in excited talk. But while Lomas watched, sleep overpowered him; he sank down—to wake in broad daylight with no trace of fever. Williams lay asleep on the other couch. He led the way back by a path that avoided the fetish hut, scarcely opening his lips. To all questions he replied, 'Be patient, sir; in the hulk I will tell you all.'

The Kroomen were waiting. When safe aboard, Williams insisted that every man should be sent forward, and locked out. Then he produced his Bible, and begged Lomas to find another. These solemn preparations affected both of them, and they sat with heads close, looking in each other's eyes, and mutually frightening one another.

'It's all quite true,' Williams murmured. 'The girl is alive—'

'Will Pantí help us?'

'He undertakes to get her back for ten bales of cloth, six hundred strings of beads, fifty pounds weight of brass, fifty muskets, six kegs of powder, ten bags of bullets, and a puncheon of rum.'

That list broke the spell. 'The confounded old Jew! Why—But what else did he say?'

‘He will be ready the day after to-morrow. You will have to go with him.’

‘Where to?’

‘To the Fetish Hole.’

‘I’m not afraid to do anything a white man may. I’d fight all the fetish men and all their devils, I hope. But you know I could not live through that journey. Why didn’t you offer another puncheon or anything?’

‘I did. Do you think I want to go? Oh, I saw sights last night! The bush is full of devils,’ he shuddered.

‘That’s why we can’t talk business without our Bibles in hand, eh? Well, we’re not in the bush now. I thought you had more nerve.’

The mulatto’s fine eyes shot a gleam of contempt. ‘You didn’t see what I saw! But I’m not frightened, sir, for I’m going to rescue that poor girl.’

‘Now you talk like a man. That’s very well said. How will Panti set about the work?’

Williams put his Bible in his pocket and rose. ‘I don’t know, sir,’ he said, ‘and I don’t wish to know. It will be bad enough when it comes.’

Lomas fumed, but under all the circumstances he could not insist. Two days later Williams called him before dawn. ‘I’m sent for,’ he said, hugging the book which no longer quitted his breast-pocket. ‘Good-bye, sir!’

‘Eh, what? how?’ exclaimed Lomas, waking.

‘This is Monday. Arm the Kroomen on Friday night, and take them in canoes to that place where we landed. Be there by daylight. Stop all day and return on Sunday and Monday. If I don’t arrive, you needn’t trouble any more.’ Before Lomas could stop him he was gone.

It was an anxious time, waiting the hour appointed. He really felt some anxiety about the youth. And his interest in the 20,000*l.*, of which he had gone in search, was maddening. Lomas swore upon the Bible, which he also, somehow, carried in his pocket at this time, to give Williams a handsome indefinite share if all came right.

On Friday, after closing the hulk, he assembled his Kroomen, and asked if they would fight. Those giants hold it a religion never to battle for their master, and never to submit to slavery. The shrewd sense and iron resolution of the negro are nowhere

displayed so strongly as by the Kroomen in these two resolves. No human beings rival them in strength. The whole nation would have been transported centuries ago, had they not doggedly, silently, killed themselves when threatened with slavery. This disposition was early learnt, and the Krooman remained a free sailor aboard the slave-ship, for he is mighty active in capturing others of his colour less resolute. The refusal to fight for a master is equally judicious. The Kroomen faithfully serve all who can pay their wages. It is not too much to say that African trade would be impossible without them. English, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and even natives employ them on the coast, and all regard them as neutrals. That they stand aside when quarrels rage is certainly no evidence of cowardice. Their tribal fights are peculiarly savage, and the whole people rise in fury if an invader threatens, as their silly neighbours of Liberia have learned at deadly cost.

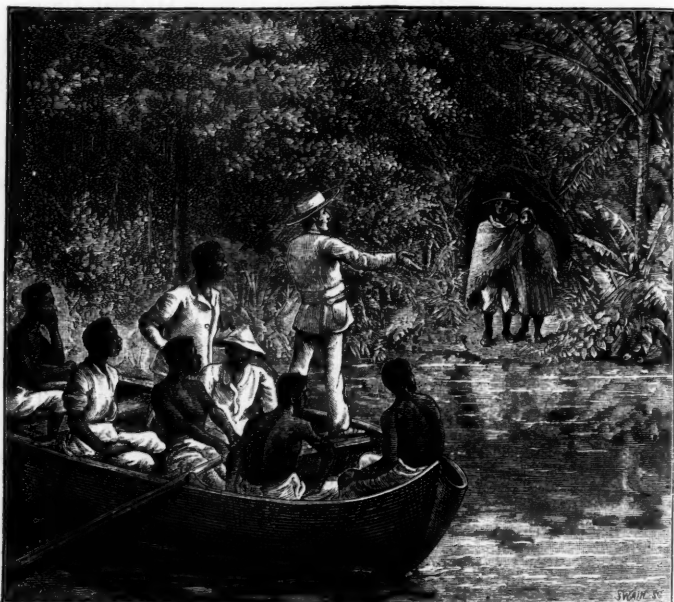
But there are exceptions to the rule. In a desperate situation, appealed to by officers they like, the Kroomen have frequently grasped arms in defiance of prudence. Lomas understood how to put the case. He pointed out that there were no other Europeans at Egkasi; that he lay under hourly expectation of recall, when the good-will of the natives would be unimportant. Then he offered a pound a-piece to those who would volunteer. The Kroomen consulted a moment, and old Tom Victory spoke for all: 'We say, fight, sah! Go'n-an'-win!'

The fever-mists were circling on the water when they reached the creek, just perceptible. As the dawn spread, they rose and rose until they hung like swathes of vapour, half way up the impenetrable wall of trees. Watching the entrance of the path, Lomas saw a face, pale and unshorn, glimmer amongst the leaves. It vanished, the branches shook, and Williams appeared. The canoe ran in, and Lomas shouted triumph as he perceived a young girl behind his cloak. '1,000%. is yours!' he cried. 'Cash! I have sworn it!'

'It's hard-earned, sir,' said Williams, passionately, helping his companion into the boat.

With eager interest, Lomas regarded the young lady who was worth 20,000%. to him. The examination was not satisfactory. He had expected a fair-haired girl, tanned, savage, half-naked, and all that, not English of feature. Miss Yardly proved to be quite otherwise. After making all the allowance possible, her

type could not be brought into harmony with the Anglo-Teutonic. Handsome it was, certainly. There are girls in England of unquestionable birth, plenty of them, whose hair is as thick and as curling, eyes as velvety, mouth as purple and as ripe, but we call them foreign-looking. And such a description would be certainly awkward for Lomas under all the circumstances. The young lady's manner also was not what he would have wished to see. Though perplexed, and doubtless alarmed, she knit her



brows and looked about her, questioning Williams with a manner of authority. It occurred to Lomas on a sudden that he had no proof of identification. Mr. Yardly might well suspect a trick unless he saw a likeness to his daughter-in-law. And suppose he were dead! What court of law would recognise this young lady's claim? The prize grew dim in the moment of grasping.

Lomas asked a score of questions, very few of which his clerk would answer. He flatly refused to tell the incidents of his late experience; mere reference to them evidently distressed him. No need to inquire whether blood had been shed; for the sleeves

of Williams's shirt, torn and ragged, had great spots of dry crust, and on the girl's cotton waist-cloth, at the hips, were brown stains unmistakable as the clutch of a gory hand.

From the entrance of the creek they saw unusual excitement prevailing in the town. This might be due to the appearance of a ship which had arrived during the night. But as they passed along the beach, several canoes put out, paddled round them, and hastily returned. Lomas went aboard the vessel, which had been sent south to deliver important letters before sailing for home direct. The firm ordered Lomas to remove at once and open a trading port in the Bight. It paid him compliments for his success under difficult circumstances, and raised both his salary and his percentage.

This letter commanded an instant decision. To disobey it entailed such loss, confusion, and disappointment to Messrs. Reid and Yardly as they would scarcely overlook, even though the motive were agreeable to themselves. But the reappearance of the junior partner's heiress would be quite the reverse of agreeable in a business point of view. On the other hand, these arrangements would occupy many months, during which a girl's presence would be very troublesome. Meanwhile, Mr. Yardly might die, if he were not dead already. And, after all, Lomas could do but little to affect the issue, though he sacrificed an excellent position to further it. He made up his mind. Williams should take the girl home in this ship. He could touch the grandfather's heart with a romantic and awful story if he would.

The young man was not eager; he had evidently too much in his mind. But the prospect of change pleased him, and to visit England is the dearest hope of a mulatto on that coast. He insisted, however, on delivering the reward promised to Panti, and Lomas checked off the articles, grumbling. At nightfall he went, with the Kroomen well armed, and returned empty. 'Don't send any one on shore,' he said to Lomas, 'whatever happens, and keep good watch.' But no explanation could be obtained from him, and next morning he went on board the 'African Queen,' which set sail. The following night there was a desperate battle at the town. Many men swam for refuge to the hulk, but Lomas refused them all, and shot down those who persisted.

I should like to tell, if space were allowed me, the incidents of that voyage, some diverting, some touching. The girl took kindly to dress in the abstract, but in practice she found it almost

unbearable. Her milliner was the sailmaker, and his honest efforts supplied inexhaustible amusement for the crew. Miss Yardly would not learn anything. She easily acquired a jumble of English, but to fix her mind on any sort of study was hateful to her. After minute examination of her quarters, Miss Yardly felt no particular interest in the ship. That was all 'white man's fetish,' in which black people had no concern. She was only curious about matters that affected herself. This equanimity certainly did not arise from lack of intelligence; but at the end of their long journey, the drollest, as all hands declared, that ever ship had made, Miss Yardly was little less barbaric than at starting. Williams had his instructions. He presented her to a lady with whom Lomas was connected, gave his letters to the astonished matron, and went in search of Mr. Yardly. He was dead! In that case Williams should have gone to a certain lawyer whose address had been given to him. But Lomas had not thought proper to tell him all, and this counsel was not followed. Williams drove straight to Messrs. Reid and Yardly. Much astonished were they at first to hear of the matter, then angry, then perplexed, finally well pleased. When they pooh-poohed the evidence of identity, Williams did not protest. Since he could not be induced to tell the circumstances of the release, it was not for him to assert a claim the value of which he but dimly understood. Finding matters so smooth, the Reids became very friendly, asked Williams to their house, and showed much interest in the young lady. Their daughters were very curious about her, though she perplexed and frightened them sometimes. One may imagine that a girl brought up in the Fetish Hole, initiated by the priests, as she seems to have been, was rather uncanny. Terrible secrets she must have known—terrible sights her young eyes have witnessed. Williams often showed distressing emotion when she talked with that mistressful air of hers in her native tongue.

There was but one way to break the influence of old times, old lessons which Miss Yardly regretted with furious passion sometimes. Williams begged the Reids to support his assertion that she was an English girl, whose fetish was the white man's, not the black man's. They refused to commit themselves in a matter of which they had no knowledge, but they allowed their womankind to act. And in the meanwhile Miss Yardly began to be much perplexed by a gradual bleaching of her skin. That ocular evidence strengthened the kindly assurance of the Misses Reid, and when one day, on pretence of 'dressing up,' they

arrayed her and themselves in ball-dresses, the victory was won. From that time Miss Yardly believed herself a white girl, and felt ashamed of her savagery.

Long before this, the firm perceived that Williams might be very useful. The shrewdest of traders at that time, or even now, cannot check his agents for want of local knowledge, which this young man had at his fingers' ends. The Reids gave him a special post, where he quite realised expectation. Lomas wrote anxiously and eagerly; Williams put the letters in the fire. The young girl's claim, never pressed, was quite forgotten; Mr. Yardly's heirs did not know her existence at this time. Meanwhile, she was baptized, under the name of Ellen; she studied hard, and learned very quickly. There was little now to distinguish her in manner from other girls of her age and station, whose force of character is half concealed under a mask of shyness. One day, in his quick fashion, Williams said to Mrs. Reid, 'I should wish to marry Miss Ellen, madam, when you think it right!' The worthy dame thought this idea equally romantic and desirable. Her husband approved. We may fancy that Miss Ellen had consented long before in her heart.

And they were very happy. Without prejudice to the question of identity, Mr. Reid gave the young couple 1,000*l.* to start with. They never spoke, even between themselves, of their experiences in the bush; but sometimes, when unexpected events turned to their conspicuous advantage, Williams would steal a glance at his wife's calm, handsome face. And events of this sort happened so frequently that his name grew to be a proverb for luck. Before he touched middle age Williams was very rich. He loved his wife dearly, but he feared her, people whispered, and they read the trace of many secrets under his dark brow. Mrs. Williams was quietly, purely, unsuspectingly happy. She had many children, all fair as flax. The single accident that roused her temper was to hear people talk 'foolishness'—a vague expression which meant for her dogma, psychological, physiological, or other of that class. All obeyed her; what she wanted she certainly had. And I feel sure, from all that has reached me, Mrs. Williams never desired aught that she could not honestly obtain, nor consciously used means to win it incompatible with her ideas of right.

Lomas also prospered moderately. What was his opinion of the process by which his ex-clerk had reached such wealth it is unnecessary to say.

SCORES AND TALLIES.

Mr. FRANK GALTON somewhere tells an amusing story, since profusely copied by all the anthropologists, of how during his South African wanderings he once wanted to buy a couple of sheep from an unsophisticated heathen Damara. Current coin in that part of the world is usually represented, it seems, by cakes of tobacco, and two cakes were the recognised market price of a sheep in Damara-land at the time of Mr. Galton's memorable visit. So the unsuspecting purchaser chose a couple of wethers from the flock, and naturally enough laid down four pieces of tobacco to pay for them before the observant face of the astonished vendor. The Damara eyed the proffered price with suspicious curiosity. What could be the meaning of this singular precipitancy? He carefully took up two pieces, and placed them in front of one of the sheep; then he took up the other two pieces with much wonder, and placed them in turn in front of the other. Goodness gracious, there must be magic in it! The sum actually came out even. The Damara, for his part, didn't like the look of it. This thing was evidently uncanny. How could the supernaturally clever white man tell beforehand that two and two made four? He felt about it, no doubt, as we ourselves should feel if a great mathematician were suddenly to calculate out for us *à priori* what we were going to have to-day for dinner, and how much exactly we owed the butcher. After gazing at the pat and delusive symmetry of the two sheep and the four cakes of tobacco for a brief breathing space, the puzzled savage, overpowered but not convinced, pushed away the cakes with a gesture of alarm, took back his sheep to the bosom of his flock, and began the whole transaction over again *da capo*. He wasn't going to be cheated out of his two sound wethers by a theoretical white man who managed bargains for live sheep on such strictly abstract mathematical principles.

Now, to most of us the fact that two and two make four has been so familiar an idea from childhood upward that we can hardly realise its true abstractness and its immense philosophical and mathematical value. But the poor heathen of Mr. Galton's story knew better; he saw that there was profound reasoning involved

in it—reasoning utterly beyond the level of his uncultivated South African intelligence. That two apples and two apples make four apples: that two sheep and two sheep make four sheep: that two men and two men make four men; those are mere matters of individual experience which any man at any time can settle for himself experimentally upon his own ten fingers. But that two and two make four—that is an abstraction from innumerable instances, containing within itself the root and basis of all subsequent mathematical science. The man who first definitely said to himself, Two and two make four, was a prehistoric Newton, a mute, inglorious, and doubtless very black-skinned but intelligent Laplace.

For just look at the extreme abstractness of the problem laid before the Damara's mind, when the over-educated European calmly asked him to accept four cakes of tobacco, all in a lump, as proper payment for two individual sheep, severally valued at two cakes apiece. It is in reality a sum in proportion: 'If one sheep is worth two cakes of tobacco, what will be the value of two sheep?' And the Damara had never been to school, or learnt from Mr. Bernard Smith's arithmetic the right way to work a rule-of-three sum. It all looks so easy to us, because we know the trick already. But how did we come to learn the trick? That is the real question. How did the white European and his ancestors manage to get so far ahead in counting of the unsophisticated heathen Damara?

I don't know how far the Damaras themselves can count; but the Chiquitos of America, a very low Indian tribe, couldn't count beyond one; for any larger sum than that, their simple language used terms of comparison alone—as many as one's eyes, as many as a crow's toes, as many as the fingers on one hand, and so forth up to six or seven. The Tasmanians could get as far as two: beyond that, they stopped short; their simple scheme of numeration was merely this: one, two, a great many. The Australian black-fellows in Queensland go a step further: they reckon thus: 'one, two, two-one (3), two-two (4);' and after that, they say, 'more than four,' meaning thereby an indefinite number. One South African tribe easily beats this rudimentary record, and knows how to count up to ten. But eleven, or both hands and one over, it regards as the *ne plus ultra* of human computation. When a British detachment once marched against it, the scouts brought in word to the elders of the tribe that an immense army

was coming to fight them—'an immense army; eleven white soldiers!'

On the other hand, some savages have really very advanced systems of numeration; for example, the Tongans, whose native numerals go up as far as 100,000. Even this degree of proficiency, however, did not quite satisfy the devouring mathematical passion of Labillardière, who asked them what they called ten times that number, and so on until he had finally made them give him names for all the subsequent decimal stages up even to one thousand billions. The polite Tongans, anxious to oblige a benevolent and generous scientific gentleman in so unimportant a matter, proceeded at once to supply him with words, which the unsuspecting explorer immediately wrote down, and duly printed as mathematical terms in the accounts of his travels. But alas for the duplicity and the unscrupulousness of savages! The supposed numerals in their higher ranges were really the rudest and naughtiest words in the Tongan language, with which, as missionaries subsequently discovered, the evil-disposed Polynesians had successfully imposed on the bland and child-like innocence of a scientific stranger. Such are the dangers of leading questions addressed in an imperfectly understood tongue to the wicked minds of the children of nature. The children of nature promptly respond in the precise spirit of an East End Arab.

The basis of all arithmetic, it may be safely asserted, lies in the primitive habit of counting on one's fingers. Not only do all children and all savages so count at the present day; not only do we all learn our first arithmetical lessons on that simple and natural portable abacus; but also all our most advanced numerical methods bear still upon their very face the evident marks of their evolution from the old mode of reckoning on the human hand. For the decimal system itself is a living result of the fact that every man (bar accidents) has ten fingers, and ten only. Nay, the very word 'digits,' by which we still express in the most abstract manner the symbols of the numbers, points back at last to the ten upheld black fingers of the original savage.

At the very first outset, indeed, the decimal system didn't have things all its own way. It was vigorously and strenuously opposed in the beginning by its vigesimal rival, the system that went in for counting by twenties, or, in other words, by fingers and by toes, not by fingers alone. Primitive man varied in his practice. Sometimes he counted his fingers only, and sometimes

he counted his toes as well. From the one plan springs the system of reckoning by tens, from the other plan that of reckoning by scores or twenties.

Both systems are at bottom, of course, identical. You want to count a great many objects—say, for example's sake, two hundred cocoa-nuts. You begin by taking one man, and counting a cocoa-nut for each one of his ten fingers; after that, you set him aside. You have reckoned ten, or one man; or if you like, you put a pebble aside to do duty for him: it stands for ten—a decimal symbol. So you go on, making fingers and cocoa-nuts balance one another till you have got to the end of the whole heap; and you sum up your calculation briefly by saying that the cocoa-nuts equal twenty men. To this day, when we write 200, we are keeping up the memory of that very act. Our decimal system marks, as it were, one man, 10; two men, 20; three men, 30; four men, 40; and so on *ad infinitum*. The nought stands in place of a man; it is the abstract sign of a completed series.

The vigesimal system of reckoning by scores proceeds in just the same manner, only it numbers fingers and toes together, and sets aside one man only when it has counted up to twenty. This, not the decimal system, was probably the original method of all the northern nations—certainly of all the Celtic peoples—and traces of it still remain in our old English numerals, three-score and four-score, as well as in the habit of reckoning sheep and various other agricultural objects by twenties. In French, the two systems still live on amicably side by side. Up to *soixante* the reckoning is decimal; but the old-fashioned *septante* has been completely ousted by *soixante-dix* (three-score and ten); while *octante* and *nonante-trois* give place to pure scoring in the case of *quatrevingt* and *quatrevingt-treize*.

Why did the habit of counting by tens finally get the better in all civilised societies of the still earlier habit of counting by twenties? Simply, I believe, because civilised peoples tend more or less to wear shoes; and shoes obviously interfere with freedom of action in getting at the human toes for purposes of calculation. Barefooted savages naturally enough reckon by twenties; but booted civilisation does its decorous counting by tens alone. Writing and the use of the slate and pencil strengthen the decimal impulse, once set on foot—for you write with your fingers (unless you happen to rival Miss Biffin), not with your toes; and our children nowadays, while they count on their fingers with great

unanimity, would probably be shocked and scandalised at the barbaric notion of anything so rude as counting on their feet.

But why is twenty called a score? Only because it represents a whole man, and is therefore scored or marked down on the tally or counting-stick as one person. In its original signification, of course, to score means merely to nick or cut a mark, especially on a short piece of wood. The word is etymologically much the same as scar; and we still talk (when poetically inclined) of a mountain-side scored by the ceaseless torrents, or of a brow deeply scored by the ravages of time. In these degenerate days, to be sure, the score at cricket is duly entered in a ruled book, together with an analysis of the bowling, a record of the overs, and a general commentary as to who was bowled, caught, or run out. But I can myself remember, in a very remote neighbourhood, when I was a boy, seeing the score kept in the true primitive fashion by another boy seated on a fence, who cut a notch with his knife for every run on one of two sticks, green-barked and brown-barked, each representing one of the two sides.

A sort of sanctify was attached to the proceeding—the sanctity that results from ancient usage. For that was the sort of swing that gave the score its present name; it was a real survival from an antique savagery. Just so the primitive arithmetician, while yet the whole world was young, counted up to twenty on a man's fingers and toes, and then made a notch on a stick to denote 'one man up,' or, in other words, twenty. It was a safer and easier way of reckoning than counting by men alone; because, in the first place, one man (for example, the reckoner himself) would serve as a numerator over and over again; and, in the second place, the score once marked on a stick remains for ever, while the men are apt to get up and walk away, which is as disconcerting to the ardent arithmetician as the action of the hedgehogs in Alice's croquet to the enthusiastic player.


The survival of the practice of counting sheep by the score, in our country districts, very well illustrates this ancient Celtic vigesimal practice. When the new county voter (called in his non-political aspect Hodge or Giles) wishes to number a flock of sheep, he does so by first counting out twenty; the counting itself being often done, not by the ordinary numerals, one, two, three, four, but by the old half-Celtic 'rhyming score,' 'Eena, deena, dina, dus, Catla, weela, weila, wuss,' and so forth, up to twenty. There, he has reached his higher unit, the score; in other words,

one man, regarded as barefoot. So he makes a nick in a piece of wood, and begins his rhyming singsong over again. Thus he counts score after score, till he reaches at last the full number, say eight score and seventeen. At that he rests. He doesn't translate the numbers into the decimal notation: why should he? It would mean far less in his mind than his native numbers. Eight score and seventeen are to him a far more real and realisable amount than 177. He sticks still to the vigesimal system. Twenty is for Giles the one true higher unit.

A tally in its origin was pretty much the same thing as a score, but it grows at last by usage and the courtesy of language into something rather different. It means in the final resort a piece of wood *taillé*—that is to say, nicked or scored. But the French origin of the word points back to its being the offspring of the more civilised and Latinised decimal system, which replaced (for all save Giles and Hodge) our old native English and Welsh method of counting by twenties. Moreover, it has now become inseparable from the very idea of a tally that it must needs tally with something or other. This sense of the word arises from the habit of giving the two parties to a bargain each a cut stick, on which the amount at issue between them was duly recorded by means of notches. As these sticks corresponded, or ought exactly to correspond, with one another, a tally came to be popularly thought of as necessarily implying correspondence. In the English exchequer—always conservative—such little bits of notched wood were given as receipts so late as the end of the eighteenth century; but at last they were accompanied by a written discharge as well, and only remained as a pure ceremonial and administrative survival.

It will further illustrate the absolute dependence of arithmetic upon the human fingers (including toes) if we recollect that in many savage languages the very words used to describe the abstract numbers are derived from the fingers or toes themselves. Thus, five in such a tongue will be the same word as 'hand'; seven will be expressed by 'one hand, two fingers'; and twenty will be put in the graphic form of 'a whole man,' or 'one man finished.'

People count long before they think of making definite signs or symbols for numbers, and when they begin to make symbols at all, the earliest and simplest are mere long rows of notches or pebbles equal in sum to the number thought of. But in time

picture-writing begins to develop itself; and then we get the earliest appearance of true ciphers. For example, the poor Indian of Pope and North America marked ten in his rude hieroglyphics—often rude in more senses than one—by a vague outline of a man, like that chalked on London walls by the surviving boy-savage—a mere dot of a head, with a straight line for body, and two outstretched arms, ended by hands, standing on a pair of very open bow legs. The Roman numerals with which we are all so familiar, and which look so grand, learned, and awful when we get them in the developed form of MDCCCXLVIII., start in reality from an equally humble and childish origin. They are mere picture-writing. When the noble Roman of remote antiquity wanted to mark the number one, he drew a single straight line or digit to represent the uplifted forefinger. In our modern type, we print it, I. For two, he drew two digits, or II; for three, he wrote III; and four he represented, not by IV, which is a comparatively late modern innovation, but by the good old clock-dial symbol, IIII. These, in fact, are nothing more than just the fingers of one hand. But how about five? Why should it be represented by the apparently meaningless symbol V? Simply because V is not V, but a rude hieroglyphic of one hand, the broad stroke standing for the four fingers united, while the narrow one stands for the extended thumb. V, in fact, is nothing more than a very degenerate pictorial symbol, like the hand  still used by printers in certain circumstances to call special attention to a particular paragraph. As for X, that is usually represented as equivalent to two such hands set side by side; but this interpretation I believe to be erroneous. I think it much more likely (on the Indian analogy) to stand for 'one man up'—that is to say, ten, with a people who counted by fingers alone, or, in other words, employed a decimal notation. If this hypothesis be true, X represents a double of the Indian man figure, with outstretched arms and legs like a colossus, the hand having disappeared entirely by disuse, as often happens in the evolution of what are called cursive hieroglyphics.

The other Roman numerals, L, C, D, and M, belongs to a far later and more civilised period. I will not go fully here into the abstruse question of their origin and development, as learnedly traced by Canon Isaac Taylor in his interesting treatise: it will suffice, for most people, to mention briefly that they spring from discarded letters of the Greek alphabet, utilised by the practical

Roman mind as numerals, and in two cases gradually twisted round by a false analogy into the semblance of C, the initial of *Centum*, and the delusive shape of M, the initial of *Mille*. This was distinctly clever of the primæval Roman; but he would probably have shrunk from so cruel a course had he foreseen the trouble that his procedure would give to subsequent archæologists, or the battles that would be waged by unborn nations over the origin and nature of his forgotten symbols.

Numerals like I, II, III, IIII, V, and X scarcely rise above the very lowest level of savage picture-writing. They recall the records of the noble red men of the west and the modern Eskimo, who, when they wish to state a number in writing, do it, so to speak, as the logic-books say, 'by simple enumeration,' putting down an exact picture of the persons or objects involved in the transaction. Thus the well-known chronicle of the achievements of Wingemund, chief of the Leni Lenape Indians, who attacked the English settlements in 1762, proceeds entirely on such a direct numerical basis. The chronicle was cut into the bark of a tree in Ohio more than a century since, and it proceeds after the following straightforward manner. Twenty-three braves went upon the war-path: therefore they are represented by twenty-three straight lines, bent slightly forward, to indicate progression. For ten days they marched through the forest; so the sun is displayed (with the very same broad good-humoured face he still wears in English caricature) as having surmounted ten lines, each of which marks the horizon. They attacked three English forts—shown by three square bastions; and one of them contained a couple of trading-stores—exhibited as small oblongs within the fortifications. Ten vanquished enemies, each very much like an X with or without a head to it, stand on one side. Six of them, however, are headless, and represent the scalped. Four have small round knobs on top, and were therefore, doubtless, taken prisoners. This is, as it were, the raw material of the art-writing, from which hieroglyphs, and alphabets, and numerical systems were finally evolved.

Still, the Roman V and X differ considerably, in one respect, from such Indian picture-writing, and show a corresponding advance in the direction of the numerals. They each represent not a particular object, but a number in the abstract. '*V homines*' means five men; '*X homines*,' ten men. It is not necessary to put pictures of the object five or ten times repeated;

the figure alone sufficiently expresses the qualifying number. On the other hand, few people, probably, have any adequate idea of the great difficulties in which arithmetic would be involved were it not for the happy invention of the Arabic numerals. Here is a very simple little sum in addition put Roman fashion. The reader will find it 'a nice amusement,' as the model papa always tells his daughters, to work it out as it stands without having resource to Arabic notation.

MDCXLVIII

MCCXLV

DCCXXXIX

MDCCCLXXXIV

None of these figures reaches two thousand, and yet what a hopeless task to sum them up without an abacus! But that is, indeed, a small matter. Here are two better tests of the impossibility of arithmetic without Arabic notation. Multiply (all in Roman figures) MDCCXLIV by DCLXXXVI, and divide MCCXLIII by XLV. Nothing could be simpler than those two sums, and yet it requires considerable intellect and very close attention to work them out on paper with the Roman symbols.

The fact is, an abacus, which is at bottom merely a form of score, or tally, was absolutely indispensable for arriving at anything like a high arithmetical result before the invention of the Arabic numerals. The only way to work out a big sum was then to take one lot of pebbles or cowries to mark the units, another lot for the tens, a third lot for the hundreds, and a fourth for the thousands. If one wished to sum up a large number, say to add 2347 to 8929, one put separately into each heap two pebbles and eight, three pebbles and nine (which necessitated a remove or 'carrying'), four pebbles and two, and nine pebbles and seven (carry again). No one heap, of course, could ever exceed ten; when it did, nine pebbles were taken out, and one was removed to the next heap. Observe how this primitive method of reckoning has coloured all our subsequent arithmetical language and arithmetical conceptions. Just as digit means a finger, and points back to the period when men reckoned on their two hands alone, so calculus means a pebble, and points back to the period when they reckoned with little heaps of stones, or cowries. To calculate is merely to heap up pebbles, and the differential calculus itself is the way we manipulate the small marbles in order to produce

certain high mathematical results. Even the very phrase, 'to carry one,' 'to carry two,' still used by our school-children, retains a memory of the time when ten pebbles were taken from the heap of units as soon as it reached ten or more, and one of them was added in compensation to the other pile immediately above it.

The abacus is a device for making the pebble system more systematic and more respectable. By stringing coloured balls on a wire frame, and making the white mean units, the red tens, the green hundreds, and the brown thousands, it is possible to add or multiply large numbers in a way practically all but impossible with the Roman numerals. Besides, this plan had the advantage of being, so to speak, automatic. You added tens and hundreds and thousands to the various rows without counting at all; and then at the end you read off the total according to the number of brown, green, and white balls on the different courses. The abacus substituted a mechanical device for a mental process: it made arithmetic an affair of the eye, not an affair of the brain or the intellect.

Still, no great advance in the mysteries of mathematics could ever be expected from arithmeticians who had to use such very rough-and-ready methods of procedure as these. The Greek notation was even clumsier than the Roman, consisting, as it did, of the letters of the alphabet, mostly in their alphabetical order, as if in English A meant one, B two, C three, and U twenty-one. The first step towards the establishment of the simple modern decimal system was made by the Romans, who at last bethought themselves of writing the letters standing for the unit, the ten, the hundred, and the thousand, with the number of units, of tens, of hundreds, and of thousands—the coefficient, as mathematicians playfully term it, written small on top of the significant letters.

Thus, 2,459 would be represented on this system by $\overset{\text{ii}}{\text{M}}\overset{\text{iv}}{\text{C}}\overset{\text{v}}{\text{X}}\overset{\text{ix}}{\text{I}}$. The man who saw his way to this great improvement was well on the track of the Arabic system.

But a fatal difficulty stood in the way of his further progress.

If we write $\overset{2}{\text{M}}\overset{4}{\text{C}}\overset{5}{\text{X}}\overset{9}{\text{I}}$, it soon becomes apparent to the meanest understanding (after which remark the judicious reader will hardly venture to pretend he doesn't see it) that we may safely omit the M, the C, the X, and the I, and leave the 2459 to stand on their own legs, their position alone sufficiently expressing their value as units, tens, hundreds, and thousands. As the mathematician

would put it once more, we may neglect the serial terms, and let the coefficients alone stand in their places. But when we write ^{ii iv v ix}MCXI, we cannot thus abbreviate into ^{ii iv v ix}iiivvix, because each digit of units, tens, hundreds, and thousands is not represented by a single symbol. We might indeed get over that difficulty somewhat by putting points between each series, thus: ii. iv. v. ix.; and the number so expressed might then be read 2459. But this is at best a clumsy device, and in practice the points would be always going wrong, and reducing our arithmetic to the same hopeless muddle as the weekly books in the hands of our wives and daughters.

What is really needed, then, is that each unit from one to nine should be separately expressed by a single symbol. What that symbol happens to be doesn't at all matter to the general principle: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, would do quite as well as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. As a matter of fact, our existing numerals, called Arabic, are a compromise between the two systems of picture-writing and alphabetic signs. They come to us, like the beginnings of most mathematical science, from the remote and mysterious East; and they make their first appearance under hardly recognisable forms in the Indian cave-inscriptions of the first and second centuries. One, two, and three are there represented by parallel bars, placed sideways instead of lengthways, and standing, of course, for our old friends the human fingers. It is easy enough to see how —, =, ≡ are readily converted into 1, 2, 3, the first being made upright on the analogy of the Roman I, and the other two being hastily run together with connecting lines into 2 and 3. The other units, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, are the initials or most prominent letters of the name of each corresponding number in the language of the inscriptions. We might make a similar English table thus: —, =, ≡, F, V, S, E, I, N. The immense advantage of the new numerals lies, of course, in the fact that each of them represents a single unit by a single symbol, and so allows us to express sums like 2, 347, 859, 427, and so forth, in a way unattainable under any other system. Nay, our symbolic conceptions are thus allowed even to outrun the resources of language, and the astronomer and the mathematician now habitually deal with strings of figures which it would be impossible for them so much as to express in words.

Most things unfortunately are called by wrong names. Our

existing ciphers, though originally Indian, are now universally described as Arabic, because they came to the western world from India and Africa through the mercantile medium of the Spanish Arabs. From Spain they spread to the European nations, though not without considerable opposition by the way, such as invariably testifies to the goodness and soundness of every genuine human improvement. Whenever you hear a loud popular clamour raised against anything as wicked or foolish, you may be pretty sure it will really turn out in the end a valuable invention; what everybody says must be wrong. This simple conclusion flows as a matter of course from the familiar principle, first definitely formulated by 'poor Carlyle,' that there are so many billion people in the world, mostly fools. Paynim numerals met with little favour, accordingly, from the mediæval merchant. The bankers of Florence were forbidden, on the verge of the fifteenth century, from employing these dangerous Saracen signs in any of their account-books; and the University of Padua (so very like our own Oxford) ordained that its stationer should keep a list of books for sale with the prices marked, 'not in ciphers, but in plain letters.' The hapless modern purchaser rather desires, on the contrary, that prices should be marked, not in letters, but in plain ciphers. It is noticeable that the very word cipher, here employed, is itself Arabic, and its progeny includes, not only the familiar French *chiffre*, but also, through Italian *zefiro*, the much less immediately recognisable derivative, zero. Arabic numerals were at first confined in use to mathematical works; they were then employed for the paging of books, and it was not till the middle of the fifteenth century that they first found their way with any security into general commercial society.

It is curious to reflect that the whole decimal system itself, with all its faults and shortcomings and awkwardnesses, has been foisted upon us as a pure survival by the mere accident that man happens to have five fingers on each hand. Counting by tens is a legacy of savagery. If mathematicians had now to devise, *de novo*, a system of numeration—if a new and Universal French Revolution were to sweep away at one fell swoop all records of the past, and set humanity upon its legs once more on a *tabula rasa* of arts and sciences—there can be no doubt that eight would be the number immediately hit upon by the worshippers of reason as the best possible basis for an arithmetical series. Eight would then be written 10, and 64 would be written 100, while the sym-

bols 8 and 9 would be entirely discarded from the reformed arithmetic. For eight is a good square number, divisible all round, by two and by four, and halving evenly till it reaches unity, by the successive stages of four, two, and one; whereas ten lands you at once in five and two-and-a-half, which are useless and impossible quantities to deal with practically. But the accident of savage man's predilection for counting on his fingers has burdened us for all time with this clumsy and awkward decimal system; while only the lucky fact that the Greeks and Romans wore shoes has prevented us from the still more terrible habit of reckoning everything by scores or twenties.

To go a step further back, as an ingenious American philosopher has pointed out, mankind uses decimals instead of octonals to-day because in the progress from the finned fish to the four-limbed amphibian, the number of fin-rays on each limb happened to be reduced from eight or ten to five only. Hence most of the higher animals have five fingers or five toes on each extremity; and man in this respect conforms strictly to his early pre-human arboreal ancestor. Our most advanced mathematics bear obviously on their very face the marks of their irrational and savage origin, and more remotely recall the evolution of the race from a many-rayed mud-haunting amphibious progenitor.



